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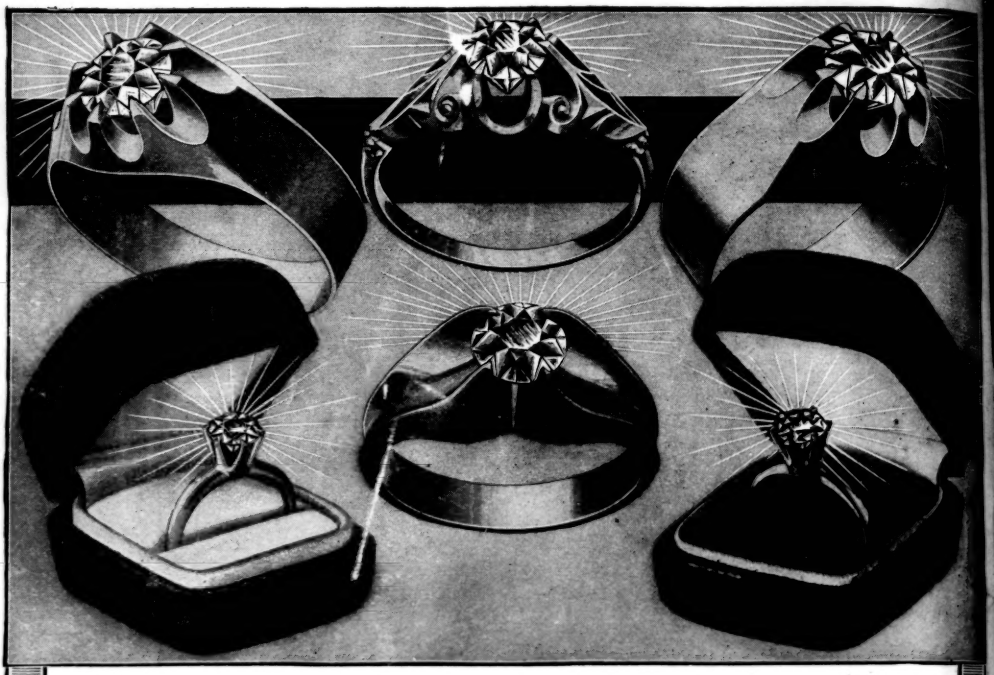

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A Letter and a Big Short Story

In the December number of this magazine we expressed an editorial hope that the "Black Cat" would do its little share in brightening dark, lonely hours and in general proving itself an earnest and capable foe of the little "blue-devils." A few days ago the following letter reached our desk.

Dear Black Cat—I am flat on my back in the Melrose Hospital after a life and death operation on the 9th, and today they have given me permission to read—your March, 1914 number. I've just read "The Snorers." It is funny, but such wonderful possibilities of being funnier have been neglected!

Now I would have had both measured, but Hawley twice as loud as Bishop by the sound measurer, but to my mind the introduction of that device does not give strength. I would have had the judges decide that more noise was coming from the room of Hawley and his wife, than from that of Bishop. Then I would have Hawley called out on business early in the morning and to be heard advising his wife to "turn over, and have another snooze"—then I should have Bishop going on and Mrs. Hawley playing up a strong second. That would "dish" the bet, of course, but would be a surprise.

* * * * *

I'm writing just to cheer myself up, and don't expect a reply.

(*Signed*)

"A little woman with grit" the doctor says.

Good for you, *"little woman with grit!"* We hope your letter cheered you for it had a most salutary effect on us. To feel that we could entertain you under such trying conditions gives us new faith. (Incidentally, did you note the approving comment on our judgment of a funny story—one which we hazarded with fear and trembling!)

"Over the Great Divide" is the title of a remarkable short story in the June Black Cat. It is by a writer new to our readers—*Arthur Leeds.* We are advertising it as "the best short story in any magazine this month." Considering our ignorance at this writing of the contents of our contemporaries for June, this is a daring bit of prophecy. But you would not feel that way if you had shared our good fortune of having read the story before it went to the printers. Anyhow, you know in magazine making one is preparing Christmas numbers in August, so being premature is a natural and logical sin.

Mr. Leeds has taken a fresh and daring plot and handled it with tenderness and feeling. It is a big emotional story as clean and as inspiring as the wonderful West where the action takes place. The central character is a tragic soul-broken figure who once wore a number in place of a name. This story will get you if your heart has not dried up. Look for "Over the Great Divide" in the June Black Cat and if you find it as good as we promise you, tell your friends of the treat.

The Black Cat

Vol. XIX MAY, 1914 No. 8

Footprints

BY HAROLD DE POLO

A heavy and thick rug saves a nominee for Mayor from political ruin and possibly states prison. This is a thriller!

DAVID GREGORY sat at the huge mahogany desk in his spacious, handsomely furnished library, his chin resting in his hands, his brow furrowed, thinking of the one telling point necessary to round out the speech that he was to make the following night. He was the People's Choice candidate for Mayor, and tomorrow was the day before election—the day when he must make his last address to the multitude that would come to hear him deliver it. It was, in brief, a summing up of his opponent, M'Gann—a tool ruled by the machine—and it was against this formidable array of rogues that Gregory was battling. Still, he could not quite get the final and essential point that would round out his otherwise perfect speech to a nicety. He wanted just one more big, striking fact that would shatter M'Gann and his party.

He heard a tinkle on the bell, frowning as he wondered who it could be that had come to disturb him.

The maid appeared in the doorway. "A lady, sir. She says that what she has to see you about is—is 'urgent and important,' them's her words!"

An amused smile went over the man's strong, firm, grave face,—strong and rugged and honest, and topped with iron-grey hair. Probably some reporter after a heart-to-heart interview, he thought. "Oh, well, just show her in, Mary!" Then, as the maid turned to leave, "By the way, yesterday you mentioned some wedding you and the cook wished to attend. You may go, I shall not need you any more this evening!"

The maid thanked him and left. Presently she returned, holding the heavy portiere aside so that the lady whose business was so "urgent and important" might enter.

David Gregory rose to his feet, a look of surprise flitting across his face as he saw his caller. She was an extremely young and beautiful woman, gowned with a severe simplicity that was quite striking; black velvet suit, black hat with a single plume, black gloves,—everything about her, in fact, plain, black, and of fine texture. It all served to bring out the pale face, the big dark eyes, the finely-arched brows, the carmine lips. Yes, Gregory told himself that she was a very beautiful woman,—almost girl, one might say.

He bowed. "Won't you be seated, madam?"

The woman walked forward across the thick, costly rug of deep maroon, showing a set of even, pearly teeth as she smiled, and took a chair close to him. "Really, Mr. Gregory," she flashed with a charming smile, "I presume that I'm horribly thoughtless to bother you at such an important time. I assure you, though, that I'm very sorry about it. But it's quite necessary, you see, for I have to leave for Chicago in the morning!"

"Not—not a bit of bother," he courteously lied.

She laughed softly,—a rippling little laugh that was very pleasant to hear. "Why, I declare! You poor man, you haven't the slightest idea who I am, have you, or what I've come about? I—really, I quite forgot!"

"I am at a loss," admitted Gregory.

The woman fumbled in her bag, brought out a card, and tended it to him with another of her fascinating ripples.

He glanced at it.

MISS ETHEL CHURCH RANDOLPH
Vice-President Woman's League for the Benefit of Crippled Children.
Main Office: Chicago.

"I assure you that it's a pleasure to meet you, Miss Randolph. And—and what may I do for you?" Hem, probably another of those subscriptions. Oh, well—

She leaned closer. "You see, Mr. Gregory, we have come to you to help us in our wonderful work. We know of your goodness and thoughtfulness to the poor,—of your many, many kind actions. We believe that ours is truly a most worthy cause. Just think, Mr. Gregory, of the thousands and thousands of poor, helpless, sickly little cripples who have never had a breath of pure country air; who have never awakened in the morning to the singing of the birds; who have never seen the gorgeousness of the green trees and flowers and running brooks; who have never known any life but that of a cramped, filthy, dingy street in the worst section of one of our big cities.

"Oh, think of them, Mr. Gregory—think of them? Does it not make your heart bleed—*bleed*—when one thinks of the wasting of those poor little darlings? Oh, Mr. Gregory, don't you think that it would be a wonderful and lovely thing to have a nice, clean, healthy, sanitary home somewhere in the freedom of the open fields and hills for these poor waifs? There they might gain sufficient strength to enable them, when they grow older, to fittingly fight the battle of life that they must to keep alive! Oh, don't you think it would be fine—*don't you?*" And she leaned eagerly forward, her lips trembling, her small hands clenched, her soft eyes dimmed with tears,—a pathetic picture that might touch the heart of anyone.

Gregory, though, had heard many such stories lately. He knew that they all, in the end, meant a subscription. He sighed inwardly. Oh, well! "You put your facts very nicely, Miss Randolph, I—"

At this point the maid appeared in the doorway. "Oh, excuse me, sir. I—cook and I are goin' now, sir! I—excuse me, sir, I just thought I'd tell you, I—"

"Thank you, Mary. You may go!"

The maid left, and, in a moment, the front door slammed and told of her departure.

Gregory turned apologetically to his visitor. "Pardon me, madam. I—oh, yes! Why, surely; I'm afraid I can't oblige you with very much, but— You see," he smiled ruefully, "this is an extremely expensive time for me. My campaign, you know!" He reached into a pigeon-hole and extracted his checkbook. "Let me see; how would—"

His words were cut short. The woman drew away from him. "How—how *dare* you," she cried, her voice rising.

Gregory had always been known as a calm man. His opponent even went so far as to call it heartlessness. He raised his grey-flecked eyebrows and started back, taken by surprise. Then he looked at the woman before him with searching eyes. "My—my dear madam," he said quietly, rebukingly.

She rose hurriedly from her seat, overturning it, and backed away. "Oh, stop! *Stop, stop, stop!*" she screamed, her voice high and penetrating.

He did not move a step, knowing that it would do no good whatsoever. He [illegible]almly in his chair, tapping the thick [illegible]g with his foot. So unconcerned was he, in fact, that he noticed what a deep impression his shoe made on the rug,—for one thinks of little things when in big situations. Nevertheless, he was doing his best to think just exactly what it all meant.

The woman now ran to the farthest corner of the room. Deliberately she knocked a vase from the mantelpiece. Then she came to the centre of the room and hastily flicked the cover from the table, sending the electric lamp onto the floor, smashed into thousands of pieces.

"Oh, help, help, help," she shrieked. "Dear God, save me from this beast—save me! Oh, oh, oh!" She snatched her hat from her head, threw it on the floor, and let down her hair. Immediately, she ripped open her coat, sending the buttons flying. Then, screaming in a terror-stricken voice, she ran to the window, pulled up the shade, and raised the glass. "Help, help," she cried. "Help—murder—police!"

David Gregory sat quite still,—thinking, thinking! He knew that the thing would not do him any good,—that it would, if he could not prove the woman a fraud, well-nigh ruin his chances. He felt that if he made any bodily move at all it would only cause the woman to make more noise, and so he stayed in his chair, his wide, high forehead creased in lines. Suddenly a peculiar smile came to his lips.

Still the woman shrieked. Presently the door below was heard to give way with a snap, steps rushed up the stairs, and in a moment two officers stood on the threshold of the door, their faces red and perspiring, their night-sticks in their hands.

The woman was leaning against a table. She was breathing hard and looked as if she had been through a violent struggle. "Oh, oh," she breathed faintly, "thank God—thank—God!"

"What—what is it, ma'am?" asked one of the men.

She pointed to Gregory, sitting stolidly at his desk. "Oh, he—he—I came to ask for a subscription—here is my—my card—and he—he—oh, he tried to—to—" She hid her face and shuddered.

The officer and his companion fell back in amazement. "He—he—Mr. *Gregory*! Why—why— What—what's it mean, sir?"

But the woman did not give him time to reply. "Oh, and to think that he—*he*—is posing as an honest man and one who wishes to become Mayor of this city! Oh, oh! But never fear, God will punish you—the *law* will punish you! Officer, I wish to have that brute arrested so that other poor, innocent women may never fall into his clutches. Oh, he—he—" And she shuddered and paused, hiding her face with her trembling hands.

The policeman's rough face softened; he looked at the People's Choice candidate for Mayor with an angry expression. "How about this, Mr. Gregory?" he asked sharply.

Gregory glanced shrewdly at the woman a moment before he turned to the officer. "My dear man, I know nothing at all about it, except that it is some vile plot!"

The man shook his head sternly. He spoke curtly. "Sorry. Guess you'll have to come along to the station. The lady prefers the charge and there's nothing else to do!"

Gregory stroked his chin with a smile. He turned on the woman and eyed her searchingly. "Madam, do you still persist in your story. I honestly warn you that you are extremely foolish!"

"Oh, you—*you brute!*" she sobbed.

"Guess we'd better be gettin' along, sir," said the officer gruffly, his sympathy for the defenceless woman again coming to the front, while his companion seconded him with a gruff rumble, murmuring that the People's Choice candidate, when this was made public, stood as much chance of getting the office as the proverbial snowball.

Gregory coughed. "Very well, madam, if you persist. And now, officers, you will admit that to have handled this lady as she infers I did—notice the broken vase and lamp—that it would have been absolutely necessary for me to have left my seat, eh? Is it not so?"

The men blinked, wondering what was coming. "Why—why I guess yes!"

David Gregory nodded. "Excellent. Men, if you will kindly walk over here carefully, I believe that I can show you that I have not left my desk all evening. Look, do you see how heavy and thick the rug is? Good. Do you see how your footprints, even now, leave a deep indentation in it? Do you see the small marks of the lady's feet all about the room? *Very* good! *But do you see any of my footprints?*"

For a moment the policemen looked at him open-mouthed. Then the one who had championed the woman muttered a smothered ejaculation and got down on his knees. They both crawled carefully and slowly about the whole room; and, glancing furtively at the woman as they did so, noticed that her face suddenly went a dead white. After several moments they rose.

He who had championed the lady spoke. "Mr. Gregory, sir. By God, sir, I'll swear black and blue that you're right. There's not a mark on the rug that shows your footprint. I—I thought differently at first, sir, I— But—but Lord, sir, what's the game, eh?" And he glared fiercely at the woman.

Gregory rose, standing tall and straight. "I think I know the game," he laughed. He turned toward the woman, looking her sternly in the eyes. "Madam, how much was M'Gann going to pay you for this—how much? Listen, I'd advise you to confess now, for it will go easier with you and I'll see that your punishment is more lenient! Madam, you'd better confess! *Was it M'Gann?*"

The woman, for a moment, looked about the room with a wild, trapped light in her eyes. She saw that she was hopelessly caught. She—

"Was it M'Gann?"

Then she dropped her head and went to pieces. "Ye—yes," she muttered, her voice low. "It—it was M'Gann!" Then, with an angry toss of her head, "But don't think *I'm* the only one in it. You'd better ask your cook and your maid how much they were paid to leave for a 'wedding' tonight."

Gregory emitted a low whistle. "I see; rather a deep plot, eh? The maid stayed just long enough to hear you discourse on your crippled children! But thank you very much, madam! Officers, you had better escort the lady to the station. I shall be over in the morning to attend to the matter and get

her written confession! Ah, you'd better have a few cigars before you go!"

In a moment they were gone, and David Gregory bent over his desk, feverishly writing out the thing that would, for a certainty, give him the election. It was the one big, essential thing that he had needed to make his point strong and positive. When it was over he leaned back, stroked the thick rug amusedly with his foot, and smiled.

"Oh, rug, I thank thee," he laughed. "By Jove, what a headline it would have made: 'Gregory Basely Assaults Defenceless Girl'—phew! Again, oh, rug, I thank thee!"

Baseball With Flowers

BY ROBERT C. McELRAVY

Here is the tale of the oddest baseball game on record. A professional team is invited to give an exhibition game at a social. The unknown opposing team proves to be their deadly rivals. Then things begin to happen—in a flower garden diamond.

"HE most interesting ball game I ever played in, son?" asked Captain Adam Connors, sitting down comfortably on the small end of a baseball bat, propped against the firm earth, and looking into the admiring eyes of a sporting writer from the *Star*.

"Well, it was two or three years ago, shortly after I had decided to pass up trigonometry and other forms of mental training at Yale, and devote my entire time to demonstrating that a line is the shortest distance between two points, by means of a baseball with a good arm behind it.

"I was resting one week in a small town up along the river, with an aggregation of lads known as the Young Giants. We had been trimming every nine we'd met that season. Hangnail Rogers, our shortstop, was about knocked to pieces. He had his sensitive hands in charge of a doctor, and was going around with gloves on, like a famous violinist just over from Austria-Hungary. Pinky Seevers, our coach, was threatening to give up the game for the season, and return to swiping horses. Scoop Hennessy's nose was still in splints from collision with a grounder, and altogether we were a sad-looking outfit.

"There was just one bunch of players we hadn't met—Sunburst Simpkins' Grizzly Bears. This crew of upstarts was running around claiming the state championship, which we felt justly entitled to, particularly as we'd sought a meeting with that team at their own terms, and they'd steered clear of us all season.

"But to get on, son, so you'll have this dope in time for a Sunday special, and not keep the linotype operator's family out of their eats. I was out taking a few hot ones from Spit Wheeler one morning—he alternating with me in the pitcher's box—when I observed a lady approaching.

"Now when I say a lady, get that down right, my boy, for that's just what she was. She had on a long, clinging gown like you see priced in the department store windows at $125—was $300—and one of those swell Gainsborough hats.

" 'I'm looking for Mr. Connors,' she said, picking her train up out of the dust.

"I felt rather uncomfortable, knowing that all the boys were piping us off, like a bunch of unoccupied cows. But I pulled myself together, like I was at a fraternity dance.

" 'I'm Mr. Connors,' I said politely. I started to stick out my hand, but remembered I had forgot to remove my mitt, which was dangling off the end of my arm like a ham end in a butcher shop.

" 'I am Mrs. Van Cott, president of the Kensington Club,' she remarked, moving around to avoid a clump of Jimp-

son weed. 'We are entertaining some friends from the Kingsville Ladies' Country Club today, and thought it would be nice to give them something in the way of men's sports; in fact we wanted to arrange a ball game for this afternoon. We already have one set of players, and I learned by chance that your team was near, so I determined to come over and ask you to assist.'

"The idea quite perplexed me at first. I hadn't thought about ladies taking so much interest in baseball. But she bit her lip, as I hesitated, and came closer, with a real anxious look in her eyes.

" 'You see,' she explained, 'there's a little rivalry between our country clubs. The Kingsville ladies surprised us with a tennis match between noted men players last month, and we want to give them something to remember in return. Now, I don't know much about baseball, but I understand it is a lively, spirited game, and I'm sure it would be interesting. Please don't say no, Mr. Connors! Of course we expect to remunerate you for your trouble.' She leaned toward me, and breathed a figure through her pearly white teeth that meant fully two week's expense money for our whole outfit.

" 'But, madam,' I objected, 'you know to play baseball you've got to have a diamond and a big field to operate in. You can't play a real game in a corner lot, like a bunch of school boys.'

"She looked at me with a kind of hurt look in her dark eyes. 'You have never been on the grounds of the Kensington Club,' she murmured. 'Otherwise you would understand that it has a ball diamond—I may say one of the best and most improved diamonds in the country. You see, the grounds were originally laid out for a men's club, and we have never greatly altered the original arrangement, only improved upon it slightly.'

"Well, son, what with her dark eyes and pearly teeth and Gainsborough hat, and my first name being Adam, I fell. I agreed to everything she wanted in the best little pink tea manner I could swing. I said we'd be over at the Kensington Club grounds at two o'clock that afternoon.

"She bowed graciously and wended her way back through the sandburs and Jimpson weed, like a moving picture of a lost princess on a desert island.

"The boys made a great pow-wow, and gave me the laugh strong. But when I mentioned the recompense, they began to sit up and whistle, for our expenses had been a source of some worry for quite a while.

"Then they began prettying up. Handsome Henry Brown washed his face with tar soap, and passed his pocket comb around to any who felt they could get it through their hair. Several of the boys got out their travelling workboxes, and began sewing up the season's rips in their togs. I was glad to see they appreciated the occasion.

"We had our noon meal. Just as we were picking up our outfit, Hangnail Rogers came over to me and asked: 'Who are we going to play against, Cap?'

"I looked at him foolishly for a moment. 'Why, I don't know, Rog, I'm sure. I forgot to ask the lady. But you know it isn't very important, don't you? We'll probably meet up with a bunch of those ladies' husbands and sweethearts, up from the city for a day's outing. I doubt not the Young Giants will be able to take care of themselves.'

"You will observe, son, that we were rather cocky about our professional standing. Hangnail didn't say anything, but I could see he was thinking the situation over, and seemed pleased because his hands were doing so well.

"We entered the grounds of the Kensington Country club at one-thirty prompt. I perceived that my ideas of

the place had been entirely too restricted. It was no children's playground we had come to visit, but a big tract of valuable property, rambling at will over perhaps seventy-five acres of hills and valleys. There were riding paths, golf-links, tennis courts, and all manner of fine fixings for outdoor sports.

" 'I'm so glad you gentlemen have come!' bubbled Mrs. Van Cott, giving me one of her dainty hands, and smiling a most wonderful welcome.

"The place was alive with feminine finery; the veranda swarmed with fair women sipping lemonade and sarsaparilla through long, cool straws. The only man in sight besides ourselves was an old fellow in working clothes.

" 'This is Mr. Jacob Peters,' said Mrs. Van Cott, bringing this old party forward. 'He is our head gardner, and has kindly consented to act as—as—'

" 'Humpire, Mrs. Van Cott,' supplied Jacob, shifting nervously from one foot to another. "Hat least Hi think that is the word, ma'am.'

"He touched his hat respectfully, and from his manner and accent I gathered that he had not been long away from Merrie England.

" 'Have you ever seen a game of baseball, Mr. Peters?" I inquired, somehow doubting Jacob's ability to judge the fine points of the game.

"He touched his hat again automatically.

"Hi believe not, sir, but Hi've hoften watched our boys at 'ome play creekit.'

" 'Where is the diamond?' I inquired, not having noticed anything of the kind lying about the premises as yet.

" 'Why, it is there, of course!' replied Mrs. Van Cott, readily, sweeping her hand before her gracefully.

"I looked in the direction indicated, and so help me, son, I was considerably disturbed for a moment. The sight that greeted my eyes might have been a section of the Garden of Eden, transplanted and set down in these club grounds! It wasn't a baseball diamond at all; it was a flower garden I was looking at, plain and simple.

"I said 'plain and simple,' but those are hardly the words. Rich and exquisite would be better. On every side were beds of richly cultivated bloom: hyacinths, sweet peas, blue and yellow iris, primroses, nasturtiums, poppies, honeysuckle—everything in the florist's catalogue! Studying the situation more closely, I made out that there *was* a baseball diamond concealed somewhere in this luxuriant plot of ground. The low privet hedge seemed to be skirting a diamond-shaped path of some sort, and in front of the dahlia bed was a bare spot on which, at some time or other a man with a pitching arm might have stood. Over beyond second and third bases, was a sort of Italian garden, with low trimmed cypress trees set out about. Still further away was a pool containing pond lilies and water plantain. A stone wall shut in the left field, from which gilly-flowers were springing.

"I took off my hat, and the boys did likewise. We were too dumfounded for speech, but stood there like a bunch of honorary pall-bearers viewing the floral tributes to the late departed.

" 'I'm afraid, Mrs. Van Cott,' I finally ventured, kicking Scoop Hennessy on the shins to keep him from laughing— 'I'm afraid it might upset the looks of those grounds somewhat to attempt playing a game of ball there.'

" 'Oh, that's all right, Mr. Connors,' she answered. 'You can run carefully, and keep away from the flowers as much as possible.'

"I looked at Jacob Peters, whose face reflected an anxiety he could not conceal.

" 'Hi should 'ate most hawfully to 'ave henything disturb my garden, sir!' he murmured respectfully.

"I sympathized with the gardener, and was about to refuse undertaking a game under the circumstances, when I felt a sudden jog at my elbow, and looked down into Scoop Hennessy's face. His mouth was set in a little straight line, and around this line was a little fringe of white.

" 'By heaven, Cap! do you see that bunch we're going to play against?'

"My gaze followed his, and I guess my own lips went white for a moment. It took only one look to show me who the fellows, now stalking into view from behind the club house, were!

" 'You haven't met your rivals, have you?' laughed Mrs. Van Cott, coming up quickly with the biggest of the lot in tow. In another moment my hand was in a vigorous clinch with the palm of Sunburst Simpkins, captain of the Grizzly Bears! This was the aggregation we had been trying to get a date with for three months past.

" 'Glad to see you,' I said, quite truthfully.

" 'Same to you,' returned Simpkins, somewhat gruffly, and less honestly, I'm sure, for he had been dodging us all season, like a groundhog afraid of his shadow.

"We looked the situation over together for a moment. Mrs. Van Cott was, of course, not conscious of the importance of this particular moment in the annals of baseball for our immediate section.

" 'Guess we're just in for a little informal gentleman's game,' I observed, watching Simpkins out of the corner of my eyes.

"He smiled softly, like a Stevenson pirate, and for a moment I thought there might be some genuine sentiment stuck away in his huge frame. 'No, o' course there can't be anything professional about this meeting,' he said. 'We'll have to arrange a series later to decide our standing.'

"I agreed to this, and Simpkins went back to his men. They were a sturdy looking set, including such players as Jack Akers, Pigeon Summers, Bat Harper and Leatherface Wilkins.

"The Grizzly's had the first inning and my men were already picking their way out to the field through the floral hazards. I stepped lightly over to first, and Spit Wheeler went to the box. Scoop Hennessy was already over between second and third, and I saw a little smile curve up around his bandaged nose.

" 'Ply ball,' came in rich cockney accent from Jacob Peters.

"Spit Wheeler tossed up the ball. Bat Harper was at the plate. He picked it for an easy one, and swung on it. Club and ball came together, and the pill went sailing over to Pinky Seevers in right field. It was right in Pinky's hands, but just as he was fairly under it, Pinky tripped over a small shrub, and muffed it.

"Bat Harper made second without interruption.

" 'Sife enough, sir;' said Jacob, from behind the pitcher's box. 'But please to be more careful, Mr. 'Arper. You stepped hon that bed of 'eliotrope between first and second.'

" 'Yes, sir,' replied Bat, flushing up considerably.

"The flowers made us all feel uncomfortable. It was like playing ping-pong in a china shop. Every move we made, we could hear excited cries go up from the ladies massed together on the veranda. It was the fairest bunch of fans a game was ever played before.

"They brought Harper in before the inning closed, but in our half of the first inning we evened the score with a run by Scoop Hennessy.

"At the beginning of the second inning, I noticed Sunburst Simpkins walking around, whispering things to his men. He even sent Megaphone Walters out along the side line to coach the players.

This I considered somewhat extraordinary, for in a gentleman's game it was hardly necessary to turn loose a vocalist like this windy fellow. I would not say Megaphone Walters had the loudest voice in the world, but on a still day you could hear it several miles. With a favorable wind you could hear it further.

"Pigeon Summers, who was at the bat, suddenly tore into the ball and sent it skimming an inch over Scoop Hennessy's reach. Megaphone Walters let out a yell of encouragement.

" 'Go to it, Pigeon!' he bawled. 'Get busy now, and show us your new heel plates!'

"A quivering gasp came wafting out from the veranda. I looked over to see how our hostesses were taking this. Mrs. Van Cott was very quiet and composed, but Mrs. Perkins, president of the Kingsville club, seemed considerably excited. 'They'll win; I know they'll win!' I heard her say.

"The remark made something hot flash up inside of me. Here me and my men were trying to do the decent thing, and one of these visiting ladies was actually taking sides with the Simpkins gang!

" 'They're out for blood, Cap!' shouted Handsome Henry Brown, who stood over on third, as fascinating as a cave man, in the eyes of the lady fans.

"I began to think Henry was right. Pigeon Summers was running for all he was worth. He was approaching second when the ball came in. Billy Hoff, our man on second, nabbed the ball, and was after Summers, hotfoot. But just as he touched Summers with the ball, Billy's foot became entangled in some Bougainvillæa vines, which tightened like a noose around his feet, and threw Billy headlong into the privet hedge. The ball fell from his grasp, and before he could recover it, Summers had danced home on an easy lope.

"I looked at Jacob Peters. I wanted to see what kind of an umpire he was. His bougainvillæa vines had fouled our player; would he let the score in?

" 'Sife at 'ome!' shouted Jacob.

Billy Hoff rose quickly, with the royal purple of the Bougainvillæa clashing angrily with his red hair. 'Does that run count?' he asked.

"Jacob walked toward the flattened spot in the privet hedge.

" 'Yes it counts, young man. And I wish 'ereafter you'd keep hout of my 'edge!'

"The injustice of this decision maddened both myself and my men. They came running toward me in angry protest against such treatment. On top of this, Megaphone Walters let out his loudest laugh. The business of being a gentleman was never harder than at that particular moment. But I held the men down as well as possible, and the inning closed with the score two to one in their favor.

"We couldn't seem to score in our half of the second. In the first half of the third, they brought in another man. This fellow dashed through a flower-bed near second base, but Jacob, for some reason, overlooked it.

"At the beginning of the last half of the third inning, with the score three to one, our men were considerably peeved.

" 'This ain't no gentleman's game!' protested Hangnail Rogers, resentfully. 'If it is, we're the only gentlemen in it!'

"Sunburst Simpkins was running around his men, smiling his widest.

"A sudden fear came to me. They were pretending to play simply an exhibition game. But suppose they won? What was to prevent them from claiming they had beaten us in a regular meet?

"I felt like a Yiddish clothier trying to sell goods with his hands tied. Suddenly I got a flash of Mrs. Van Cott trip-

ping across the grass in my direction.

" 'The flowers!' I muttered to myself. 'She's going to call us all down.'

" 'I'm sorry, Mrs. Van Cott,' I said. 'We've been trying to respect your wishes and keep off the flowers, but you see it's almost impossible—'

"Her hand fluttered up and rested on my arm like a young bird learning to fly. 'Is that what is the trouble with your players, Mr. Conners? We want you tc win so much!'

"I looked at her with a kind of silly stare. There was an anxious look in her eyes I couldn't quite understand.

" 'You want us to win?' I repeated.

" 'Yes, we do. You see, those ladies from the Kingsville club have wagered a porcelain jardiniere against a cut glass punch bowl that Mr. Simpkins' men could beat you. We took your side—your men looked so big and strong, and we do want that jardiniere so much!'

" 'But the flowers, madam?'

"She shrugged her little shoulders adorably. 'Bother the flowers—Jacob can plant more of them!'

"This word acted like a spring tonic on my men when I passed it out to them. Billy Hoff started tc let out a yell, but I stopped him. 'Hush,' I said, 'don't do too much talking; just play ball!'

"We picked off a score in the last half of the third, and as we did so a soft patter of hands from the Kensington side of the piazza came like music to cur ears.

"They held us in the fourth, fighting like mad all the time. But we held them too, and when it came our turn in the last half of the fifth, the score was still three to two in their favor.

"I put Pinky Seevers out on the side lines to encourage our boys a little. Pinky is not a loud talker, like Megaphone Walters, but he's what you would call fluent. Under his inspiring comment, an ordinary one-horse runner could sometimes make two bases where he would usually make only one.

"Handsome Henry Brown was at the bat.

" 'Now Henry,' observed Pinky, 'remember you are not here entirely for ornamental purposes. You're pretty and nice to look at, but what you really want to do is to hit the ball!'

"Henry hit the ball, all right. He cleaned up first, and hustled down to second, where Bat Harper was standing, apparently having a fine little sleep right in front of the base. Bat didn't move but Henry moved him. Bat lit in a bunch of nasturtiums ten feet away, and Henry hurried on to third, which he made without interruption.

" 'Sife at second!' came the surprising statement from Jacob Peters.

" 'At second?' asked Henry indignantly.

" 'Yes, me blooming laddie. You 'ad no business knocking Mr. 'Arper into those flowers!'

"I went out to remonstrate, when I heard a sudden swish behind me. Mrs. Van Cott, followed by numerous other ladies were invading the diamond.

"They marched up to Jacob.

" 'My word!' exclaimed Jacob, reddening perceptibly.

" 'Jacob, what do you mean by saying this gentleman didn't get to third base?' asked Mrs. Van Cott.

" 'He didn't make it fairly!' interposed a second lady, turning wrathfully on Mrs. Van Cott. 'I know something about this game—my husband used to play right field for the Syracuse Blue Sox!'

"Mrs. Van Cott bit her lip in vexation. Jacob, sulking behind the pitcher's box, suddenly found himself the center of considerable feminine emotion. A number of women began throwing broken flower heads at him. It threatened for a moment to become a genuine War of

the Roses. 'Give over! Give over! lidies!' roared Jacob.

"Handsome Henry Brown, seeing that the game might be disrupted, finally settled matters by going to second. He said he'd take chances on getting home.

"We cleared the field of the excited ladies, and succeeded in bringing Henry home, making the score three to three.

"Sunburst Simpkins was wild; his face looked more like a cloudburst than a sunburst.

"The sixth and seventh innings passed without a run on either side. Then, in the first half of the eighth, they hung one on us. Leatherface Wilkins blew into home on an error, like a dead leaf in a windstorm. This was disheartening, as Leatherface generally fanned or died on bases.

"We held them through the first half of the ninth, and came to our last bat with a sort of forlorn hope staring us in the face.

" 'One score won't do, boys,' I said to the men. 'We've got to have two, anyway. We can't let that bunch go out of this summer garden claiming they have trimmed us up!'

"Once more my men straightened up for the conflict. Simpkins and his players were idling about on the bases, smiling gleefully over the situation. They had no doubt of holding us down to at least an even score. Their man in center field was lolling about among the cypress trees, throwing pebbles at the lilies in the pool. Over in left field I could see Jack Akers picking gillyflowers off the stone wall.

"In addition to this maddening attitude on the part of our opponents, the Kingsville ladies were also disporting themselves in an irritating manner. They were marching about haughtily and drinking imaginable draughts from their cut glass punch bowl—the bowl they expected to win from the Kensington club! Mrs. Van Cott and her followers were of course considerably depressed.

" 'Have we won yet?' Mrs. Van Cott kept asking me nervously, every time the ball moved. The hardest work of my life was looking down into her tenderly hopeful eyes, and telling her no.

"We worried along through the last half of the ninth till there were two outs against us, and things were looking gloomy indeed. So far we had not even tied the score.

"Hangnail Rogers came to bat.

" 'How's your hands, Rog?' I asked.

" 'Purty bad, Cap. But I'll do my best.'

"Against all of our expectations, he did. He hit out the nicest little two-bagger we'd had that afternoon, and came to rest on second base, breathing hard.

"I can't begin to tell you, son, of the new hope that flamed up in the bosoms of myself and my men when Rog performed this little feat. Here was our chance; we might yet wrest victory from our difficult situation!

" 'Are we winning?' came in dulcet tones from Mrs. Van Cott.

" 'Not yet,' I answered between my set teeth, not desiring to awaken false hopes with reference to a certain porcelain jardiniere she was thinking about. But it was my turn at bat next, son, and as I bared my good right arm, and stepped to the plate, I was determined to do or die. In these days a ball player is allowed to talk freely, and I will be as modest as possible about what I did.

" 'Ply ball,' said Jacob, impatient of the delay. Even at that crucial moment I felt sorry for the old fellow. He stood like a statue of Gloomy Gus, behind the pitcher's box, surrounded by the remnants of his once proud floral beauties. The tattered privet hedge, the tangled masses of blue-blooded Bougainvillæ. and the streaming red of shattered roses

made the place look like some glorious shambles. Though Jacob had been prejudiced and unfair I knew he loved this little spot, and determined in my heart that his sacrifice should not be in vain.

"The ball passed me, with the angry whistle Pigeon Summers knew how to put into it.

" 'One strike, sir!' announced Jacob, quietly.

"Again the ball ripped past.

" 'Ball one,' said Jacob.

"A third time it cut the air.

" 'Strike two!' counted Jacob.

"Two balls followed, one high and the other low. What did Summers mean? Was he afraid to give me a real one? I prayed in silence for something I could hit.

"Behind me everything was quiet, except for a sort of choking sob from Mrs. Van Cott. Pinky Seevers said never a word. At such moments coaching is unnecessary.

"I took a final look at the wrecked garden. Then the pill came, and I smashed it!

"I didn't know where it went, for I was busy running. I heard screams of mingled encouragement and despair from the ladies. Then, as the wind whistled about my ears, I heard a few pleasant little words from Pinky. He said: 'Run, Cap, run like the hot place!'

"I made first easily, and toddled on to second. Here I found Bat Harper taking another little nap in front of the base. I think he had some idea of stopping me, but I sailed into him, and I think we both tore up some more of the privet hedge. At least I heard a curious utterance from Jacob several times, which sounded like hell with the 'h' off.

"I touched second with my foot, and broke away from Harper. He had some idea of fighting, I think. But I did not wait. Fighting should be done in a leisurely manner, with ample time to enjoy it. Just now I was more interested in running.

"From across the field I could now hear the mad bellow of Megaphone Walters, inciting riot. Still I saw nothing of the ball.

" 'Come on, Cap!' shouted Pinky, in his quiet, penetrating tones.

"At third, I cleared the way of more surplus humanity. Two men collided like dominoes before me, and I touched the base and ambled on.

"Behind me, several personal conflicts were in progress. My men were doing some fine interference work to keep the Grizzlies off me so I could make home.

"Jacob was in the conflict, somewhere. Cries of a mixed character came sweeping to my ears from every side:

" 'Where's the ball?'

" 'Keep hoff my posies, Mister Hadams!'

" 'Cut that stuff, Johnnie Bull; this ain't cricket we're playing!'

" 'Where's the ball?'

" 'Oh! Oh! Oh! What's happening now?'

" 'I say, Mister Hadams, keep hoff my greens!'

" 'The ball! The ball! Get her in here, quick!'

" 'Beat it, Cap. Beat it!'

"Like a man whose life is in danger, I heard all these things, but nothing occurred to stop my progress, and I dashed into home without any trouble. Hangnail Rogers was there before me, and we shook hands breathlessly, as a cheer went up from my men, on all sides of the field.

"We had won the game and all claim to the state championship, until we had a chance to beat them in an official series, which we subsequently did!

"My men were mad with joy, but the Grizzlies were a sullen lot. The ball had not come in yet. But I could now see

why. Over in the Italian garden, in the vicinity of the pool, their three fielders were gathered. My long fly, it seemed, had gone directly over the pool, and their right fielder, in trying to get under it, had backed into the basin of water.

The basin was of cement, and sloped downward on a long curve, so that once in there the fellow could not climb out without help. The other had pulled him out, but the ball was still somewhere in the pool. Jacob had decreed early in the game that the natural hazards of the place should operate as much against one as the other, so there could be no forfeiture on our part.

"Suddenly there was swish of silk beside me, and Mrs. Van Cott fluttered down between Rogers and myself. Her lips were twitching strangely, and there were tears in her pretty eyes.

" 'I'm sorry, Captain Connors! You ran so beautifully around the diamond. It's too bad they can't find the ball—I wanted your side to win so much!"

"I looked at her a moment in sadness. Never before had I witnessed such beautiful, but abysmal, noncomprehension of our great national game!

" 'Dry your tears, madam,' I murmured, doffing my cap politely. 'Have you decided what sort of a jardiniere will look best on your piazza?"

" 'Why—why—Mr. Connors—what do you mean? They haven't found the ball yet!'

"I peered wisely over toward the pool, where the Grizzlyfielders were still poking about the lily pads with long, forked sticks.

" 'I mean, madam,' I said, as modestly as possible, 'that that little gallop I made around the diamond was what is technically known as a home run. As for the ball, don't you worry about that. It was our job to hit it, not to find it!'

"The smile she cast upon myself and my men was something to be remembered for many a day."

The Blind Goddess Nods

BY DAVID A. WASSON

A sheriff follows a crook aboard a fishing schooner and ships with the crew in order to get his man right. But the sea and its followers have a law unto themselves and it might be defined as "A man's a man for a' that."

THE Gloucester fishing schooner *Manatee,* dogging mackerel off the Maine coast, capped a month of lean luck when the cook scalded himself severely and had to be landed at Bayhaven. While Skipper Charley Wales ransacked the water front of the somnolent little hamlet for another chef, man after man of the crew stripped to the waist among the pots and kettles, and with indifferent success assumed the role of ministering angel to his hungry fellows. The result of such labors was simply to make more evident the grim fact that the sixteen men were starving in the midst of plenty.

Three days passed, Skipper Charley, in desperation, telegraphed to Rivermouth for a new cook, and two of the crew went ashore and conveniently failed to return. Bayhaven knew not how closely its quiet harbor escaped a tragedy; knew not that potential malefactors lurked in the sooty, wild-eyed men who daily met the rickety little jerkwater train as it pulled into the station. Each time the vessel's reception committee failed to discover among the straggling passengers who got off the single combination coach any person who looked in the least as though he would be of help in the present strait; even on the third day, when an unprecedented crowd of four people disembarked.

First came the village storekeeper, back from a stock-replenishing trip; then a wiry, pale-faced young fellow of middle height, in a tall silk hat and light summer overcoat,—possibly the minister; next, two women whom the young man helped to alight with their bundles, politely doffing his hat as he did so.

"Well, boys," said Skipper Charley despondently as he turned away, "I don't see but what we might jest as well git off aboard agin, and try to—"

"Ah, there, sports!" called he of the silk hat at this moment. "If you are the *Manatee's* bunch give me a hand with this dunnage, will you?"

"Suffering fishhooks, it's the Duke!" gasped one of the crew; but the delegates rose nobly to the occasion, and in a few minutes more the new cook and his trunk were bumping alongside the vessel in a dory.

"No use, Elder, we're past all missionaryin'," announced old Joe Gunnell lugubriously, as he came out of the forecastle followed by an eddy of blue smoke and a distinct odor of scorching.

"Missionary nothin'! He's the undertaker, and he's got more git-up-and-git to him than anybody I've seen ashore there yit!" contributed another dyspeptic looking individual.

The new cook, however, held his tall hat in one hand and backed gingerly below for a survey of his new domains. In a moment up he popped again.

"Cap'n Wales," he announced, "I was running the Martinique Hotel when Mount Pelee cut loose, but take it from me the mess down there could give it cards and spades! What in Sam Hill

has been turned loose here, anyhow?" And with an air of intense disgust he bent over and detached a fragment of alleged clam fritter from the sole of one polished russet shoe.

Skipped Charley explained profusely; the cook concluded to stay awhile at any rate, and began to get out of his shore toggery with evident distaste. The big trunk was unlocked as it lay on deck and he proceeded to don working garments, quite oblivious to the audible doubts cast upon the calibre of a man who wore underclothes in summer.

"Five years ago last spring," he volunteered as he worked himself into a snowy jumper, "I was assistant governor-general of the Philippines, and since then, believe me, there's nothing to it when I work in anything but white."

Another dory banged alongside, and her occupant, a stout, red-faced man in a shiny blue serge suit, came over the rail, painter in hand. "Heard you were short a man," he said to the skipper gruffly.

"Yep, two;" said Captain Charley briefly. "Wanter go along?"

"That's what I came for; name's Hooker!" replied the newcomer with equal directness. And he promptly severed shore ties by the simple and popular method of casting adrift his borrowed dory and allowing her to find her way back to her outraged owner as best she might.

Soon a black smoke poured from the stove funnel, and half a dozen times in succession the new cook came on deck and drew buckets of water from the gaudily painted butt by the foremast. Then several pails of ashes and eggshells were brought up and thrown over the side, followed by such quantities of abortive puddings, biscuits and cakes as might well suggest to a stranger the loss of a city garbage scow in the vicinity.

"Believe me, the time I cleaned up Omaha for the Federal authorities after the tornado hasn't got anything on this, and that's going some," he observed. An hour later he was reported to be scrubbing the forecastle floor,—a piece of news that drew forth more criticism.

"Cal'late we'll git grub along about tomorrer night," growled old Joe. "That is, if the blamed dude knows how to cook at all, which I doubt!" But a short time later the supper bell was rung vigorously, and the crew of the *Manatee* sat down to their best meal for many days.

"Was Delmonico's chef four years ago," he said modestly to compliments.

The began a new era aboard the *Manatee;* an era not only of sumptuous fare, but of doughtnuts, cookies and coffee in unlimited quantities for mugging up at all hours. That the new cook often assisted in dressing a deck of mackerel for hours under the stars made no difference in the promptness of the piping hot meal that invariably followed the back-breaking work, no matter what the time. It only served as a pleasant reminder, he observed, of the days when he controlled the red snapper fishery out of Pensacola. The crew began to brace up and catch fish. Small wonder that the Duke's little conceits were good-naturedly countenanced by most of the crew, and that the *Manatee's* crowd began to brag of their find to the other vessels of the seining fleet.

Old Joe Gunnell and the new hand did not relish the dapper little upstart's monopoly of attention. Old Joe had long enjoyed the reputation of champion misanthrope of the fleet and the badinage that went with it. Hooker had apparently come aboard with the intention of becoming cock of the forecastle, but his blatant yarns of great accomplishment failed to conceal the fact that he was anything but a good fisherman, and he soon became a joke. And the

two unappreciated prodigies formed an alliance over their grievances.

"What chance has good men like me and you got at this day of the world?" said Old Joe sourly, as he savagely whittled the edge of a trawl-tub. "Me and you is thrown into the discard while that little whippersnapper of a dude cook has the whole crew allowin' the sun rises and sets in the seat of his breeches! I cal'late if me and you was to go and learn a few kid monkeyshines, Hooker, they'd fight theirselves for the chance of hangin' round in our company!"

But Mr. Hooker, instead of agreeing to this tirade with profane vehemence, as was his want, hesitated a moment, and then whispered a few words into his crony's ear. Whereat Mr. Joseph Gunnell's scrubby jaw dropped in blank amazement, and then the owner thereof slapped his thigh with much satisfaction.

"How's that?" said Mr. Hooker, disagreeably, and nudged Joe in the ribs.

But the *Manatee* continued to find the mackerel, and one calm gray morning, thirty miles off Thatcher's Island, the supply of salt on deck gave out. It became necessary to get several barrels of it from the vessel's hold. A tackle was reeved off, but the cant hooks could not be found and a vexatious delay ensued. Just then the cook, with sleeves rolled up, stuck his head out of the fore-scuttle for a little fresh air.

"Why don't some of you guys beat it down there and pass up a few of those kegs?" he called presently.

"Yas, I think I see myself passin' up a barrel of salt!" sneered Joe Gunnell, who stood over the hatch with the falls in his hand. "I'll bate dollars to doughnuts there ain't a man aboard kin put one on deck, let alone any—"

"That's the easiest thing we do!" said the cook lightly, lowering himself into the hold. Taking a barrel by the chines he staggeringly swung it at arm's length above his head and lodged it on deck amid a chorus of generous approval. "Sing out when you've got enough of them up there," he called.

"I suppose forty-five years ago you were raising heavy weigths for P. T. Barnum!" mimicked Hooker enviously. It was the first time, so far as noticed, that he had acknowledged the cook's existence to such an extent.

"Surest thing you know!" said the man in the white jumper promptly, while Hooker's shipmates shut him up indignantly.

"Look a' here, Hooker," reproved Skipper Charley, taking the scoffer aside, "jest you don't put your oar and rumple his fur the wrong way, and we'll be high-line of the fleet yit, see if we aint! We don't want to kill the goose that lays the golden eggs, see? The Duke's the best kind of a mascot!"

"I don't understand what you can see in that little runt!" grumbled Hooker. "He's no good! And as for lifting those barrels, why I was middleweight champion of—"

"By golly then, that's just the ticket! Why didn't you say so before?" exclaimed the skipper with disconcerting suddenness, and he took Hooker by the arm and marched him aft to the men. "Boys, here we have it!" he told them. "Here's a second Fitzimmon's been hidin' his light under a trawl-tub for two weeks, and we been missin' all kinds of fun. How about—"

"Oh, Duke!" called a perspicacious member of the crew. "Bring up the mitts! We need ye!" The cook laughingly came on deck, whiping his hands on his apron.

"I ain't in the cradle-snatchin' business!" said Hooker contemptuously.

"We'll see about that later!" declared Skipper Charley. "Ye wouldn't de-

prive us pore hard-workin' sailormen of a little pleasure, would ye?"

"Get busy, Hooker! Now's your chance to make good!" bantered the crew.

Hooker plainly had considerable science, but it soon became evident that the Duke was simply toying with him; touching him up cleverly in spots, and dodging his sledgehammer blows in a most exasperating manner. Hooker was not the sort to submit long to this kind of bull-baiting. Suddenly he made a mad rush at his elusive opponent and actually attempted to kick him with his heavy red fishing boots. Then the cook lost his smile. From abreast the main rigging aft, around the quarter deck and forward again to the windlass-bitts, Hooker cringed and backed; till at length, being fairly cornered, down he went on deck in a heap amid frantic yells from the crew.

But that attempt at kicking was an unlucky break on Hooker's part. The Duke wasn't quite through with him yet. Whipping off his gloves he pounced on the old-time middle-weight champion before he could regain his feet, and in spite of his struggles, a moment later Hooker the doughty, was standing on his head in the great coil of six-inch cable on the port bow; while the sea around resounded with a babel of yells and catcalls, blasts from the patent foghorn, and a deafening clanging of the ship's bell.

And the jubilant crew rode their mascot around the littered decks on their broad shoulders, and swore roundly that his like was not to be found between Quoddy Head and Cape Hatteras.

"Oh, that's nothing, fellows," disclaimed the cook blushingly. "Ten years ago in Frisco I put it all over John L. Sullivan in less time than that!"

As for the defeated pugilist, he extricated himself from his undignified position with some difficulty and walked aft with face of an apoplectic hue and body a-tremble with rage. The crew took good care to keep beyond his reach.

"You—you damned little manikin!" he roared, shaking his huge fist, and unmindful of the epithet's reflection on his own prowess. "You'll laugh out of the other side of your face before I get through with you! I'll land you behind bars, where you belong! What do you think I'm here for, anyway?"

"That's what I've been wondering, Hooker!" mused the skipper. "Not to sailorize, that's blamed sure!"

"I'll sailorize with any of you!" snapped Hooker, and then he ripped open his coat and showed a shiny badge on his vest front. "See that? If this old garbage scow ever gets into Massachusetts waters again I'll undertake to put one Richard Trimble where he wont—"

"Back up, neighbor, you're in the wrong stall!" advised Skipper Charley. "There ain't no sech feller aboard here."

But at this juncture the cook of the *Manatee*, befrocked again, walked up and calmly confronted the sheriff. "Looking for me?" he demanded.

"What's the matter, Duke? What's he got on ye?" clamored half a dozen voices. "Say the word and we'll head him up in a barrel! Say the word, Duke!"

The mascot of the *Manatee*, however, waved a deprecatory hand toward his would be protectors. "Oh, that's all right, fellows!" he assured them blandly. "I'm the guy that put the 'i' in penitentiary!"

"Well, by the jumpin' Jehosaphat, that blowhard ain't goin' to—" began a man valiantly, but Skipper Charley interrupted him.

"No, no, Bill, none of that!" he said decidedly. "You'd get yerselves inter all kinds of trouble that way. Our hands is tied, I'm afraid!"

"School-o!" sang the lookout on the foremast.

"Thank goodness our mascot's still on the job, anyways!" said a man fervently, and the crew tumbled overside into a seine boat piled high with rusty looking twine.

But Sheriff Hooker folded his arms and assumed a truly Napoleonic pose. "Not for me!" he announced. "I stay right aboard here and keep an eye on this bird! I'm an official of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in the discharge of my duties!"

"I don't give a damn if you're Most Supreme Exalted Muckymuck of the Eminent Order of Hod-carriers!" rapped out the skipper. "You've signed articles aboard this packet jest now, and by the great horn spoon you'll obey my orders while you're on the high seas or I'll put ye in irons! Now pile into that seine boat or I'll sic the cook on ye agin! I ain't interferin' with yer duty none, I tell ye! You've got the poor Duke right where ye want him, ain't ye? Sea's as smooth as a mill pond and he can't git away unless he sprouts wings."

"Don't cheer, boys, the poor devils are dying!" said the cook solemnly, as the humbled representative of the Commonwealth complied in thoughtful silence.

Captain Charley and the lookout jockeyed the *Manatee* into the neighborhood of the frothing quarry, and then they too, took their places in the seine boat. Two more men got into the attendant dory on the other side of the schooner and they all cast off, leaving the cook, as customary, on board as ship-keeper.

Like a lifeboat off to a rescue, the long white seine boat drove foaming toward the fish, Skipper Charley at the twenty-foot steering oar, a picturesque figure in yellow oilskins, with two inches of black clay pipe parting his heavy grizzled moustache.

And then, with the great purse-seine around a fat school, the boats fast to the biggest haul of the season, and the whole outfit three miles to leeward of the schooner, a wicked-looking squall of wind and rain screamed with scant warning out of the cloudbanked northeast. How the cook single-handed got the mainsail and jib down after the *Manatee* had been knocked flat on her beam-ends, how he ran blindly down the wind under a goose-winged foresail and shot up deftly alongside the desperately bailing boat's crew, and how, as the result of his good seamanship, they saved every last fish, are matters still talked of aboard the *Manatee*.

Joe Gunnell walked up to the cook after they had got everything snugged down, and the words he spoke sounded as if they were being windlassed out of him. Hooker he ignored altogether. "Duke," said he, "hereafter you act as damn crazy as ye please, and lie till ye're black in the face, and while ye're aboard here I'll fight the fust galoot that opens his head to ye! Duke, ye're—ye're some little cook, but ye're no kind of a crook! Why hadn't ye skipped out with the vessel while ye had the chance?"

"What he did will probably have the effect of shortening his sentence!" conceded Hooked sullenly. "It was a pretty fair job!"

"Oh, that's nothing, girls!" said the Duke with a wink. "Thirteen years ago I went around the world with Captain Joshua Slocum on one of his famous single-handed trips."

But the squall was the forerunner of a heavy gale of wind, and much as Captain Charley wished to stay at sea and keep the cook aboard as long as possible, he finally felt obliged to square the *Manatee* away under short canvas. She ran shoreward for shelter amid a riot of leaping, frosty combers. A funereal air brooded over the wet decks and even

the warm forecastle, where good fellowship usually held full sway. The cook himself seemed perfectly unconcerned as his hours of liberty shortened.

Into Gloucester Harbor boiled the *Manatee*, just as wild, inky night fell. Captain Charley, feeling in no mood to parry the thrusts of the furious squalls that screamed out of the haven, let go an anchor inside Ten-Pound Island,tied everything up and disconsolately stuck up a riding light.

"Richard Trimble, I arrest you in the name of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts!" proclaimed Sheriff Hooker pompously, drawing forth his warrant. "And you'd better come ashore with me without making any fuss."

"I wouldn't try to land tonight if I was you, Sheriff," said the skipper politely. "These flaws is strikin' heavier every minute, and you'd be liable to go adrift tryin' to go ashore in a dory. I wouldn't want the State to run no risk of losin' a dangerous criminal! Boys, better give her the other mudhook! Looks like we might git a regular old combustible out of this!"

Soon she needed them both, and there was good prospect that she would want more ground tackle. Captain Charley ordered the crew to overhaul the kedge. His voice sounded mightily small in the howl of the storm. The schooner rode the gale amid a weltering froth of whitecaps. They seemed more stray tops lost in the tumult than respectable combers. They raced down the wind as if pursued by demons, and all the time grew hungrier. The surface of the sea was scourged, flayed, lashed into ribbons by the force of the wind. The shrouds hummed in the gusts with a fiendish cadence. Halyards drummed against the masts in frantic tattoo, as if mustering a host of malevolent storm spirits to the fray.

Rain hissed upon them in stinging, blinding torrential sheets that might have come from either sea or sky. It tasted salt upon the lips, and it spouted in sizeable streams through the scuppers. In its pitiless charge it swept and scoured the decks bare as the foam-flecked strand. Both cables stretched far out ahead of the schooner, rigid as bars of iron, showing the desperate strain on her deep-buried anchors. The drenched crew huddled in the meagre lee of the masts and deck houses, thanking their lucky stars that they had reached a safe harbor when they had. They wondered how it would have been if they had stayed at sea, if this spelled safety!

Did it spell safety? The *Manatee* bade fair to be in the position of a man who accomplishes an altitude record in an aeroplane and then falls to disaster when a few feet above the ground. For now both anchors began to drag.

Before the shrieking gale, the schooner edged stern first toward the bristling wharves. She hardly looked at the kedge anchor they let go as a last resort. Slowly she drifted up between two piers, reached the end of the dock, and her bow swung around till her main crosstrees sawed the tangle of electric wires skirting the harbor edge.

Then something happened! As the *Manatee's* wire rigging cut the insulation of the shore wires, every spar, stay and guy on her, leaped instantaneously into wild, uncanny brilliancy. The whole harbor front, the deluged heavens, the infernal night itself blazed with soul-stunning white flashes. The jagged soaring pyrotechnics born of a murderous short circuit dwarfed all mankind besides. Between the unearthly, malignant gushes of light, came blackness such as belongs not to this world; absolute, annihilating, Stygian.

Up town boomed a fire alarm amid the crashing of tortured elms. About the plunging schooner resounded the

crunch and squeak of splintering fenders, that told their feeble share of the extremity of her plight. Sulphurous fumes eddied in the nooks, and flaming serpents slashed across the streaming decks, but the crew were housed beyond their reach. Then the electric company shut off the current, and the show was over. Already a vigilant tug-boat hovered off the end of the dock, the pungent smoke from her funnel fogging the schooner's deck.

"Are we all here?" panted the skipper, crawling out of the cabin and mopping a perspiring brow.

"All but the sheriff, I cal'late!" answered someone. "He lit out when we fust fouled the wires, and I'll bate he ain't stopped runnin' yit!"

"Sho!" said the skipper. "Then let's get hold of this tugboat and make tracks out of here while the goin's good!"

The Slates of Fate

BY HOWARD DWIGHT SMILEY

Two grafters searching for their lost swag consult a medium who is to summon the original owner of the treasure from spirit land. The ghostly wires get crossed and the grafters take a long journey.

YSTERO," the trance and slate writing medium yawned wearily, settled deeper into his chair and peered whimsically across to a human skull that rested on a crystal stand in the corner.

" Business seems to be pretty slack tonight, Willie," he remarked pleasantly.

The skull's grinning jaws opened and closed three times with as many sharp clicks of its teeth.

This startling behavior did not seem to disturb the medium. He smiled back amiably, and glanced at his watch. The hands pointed to the hour of ten-thirty.

"I guess we might as well turn in," he remarked, as he returned the timepiece to his pocket. "There'll be nothing—"

A bell tinkled faintly, coming apparently from the medium's elbow. Instantly Mystero seized the right arm of his chair and threw it over disclosing a hollow aperture beneath. Reaching into this with both hands, he pressed what appeared to be an electric button with his right hand, while he withdrew with the other an instrument resembling a telephone receiver. This last he placed to his lips and spoke in a low, sepulchural tone:

"Step right in. Step right in. The medium is waiting for you in the second room to the right."

Heavy footsteps sounded on the bare boards of the hallway, and as Mystero heard them he hastily replaced the receiver and restored the arm to its normal position. As he did so the outer door slammed loudly.

Two men appeared at the entrance of the room and peered in nervously.

"Walk in, gentlemen," invited Mystero cordially, but without rising.

The two men advanced into the room apprehensively.

"Who in the blazes opened that door?" whispered the leader, a short heavy man with an undershot jaw.

"The door is attended by James, my spirit butler," answered Mystero cheerfully.

The other shrugged his shoulders and glanced fearfully at his companion, a tall lank man, with a cataract over his left eye.

"What do you know about that?" he inquired in an awed tone.

The last man shivered and shook his head. "I don't like it," he muttered. "Let's get out o' this."

"Aw, where's yer nerve, you piker. There ain't nothin' goin' to hurt you; I've seen these fakers before," growled the short man, with a great show of bravado.

"We seen your ad in the paper," he continued, turning to Mystero. "It says you can talk with dead folks; is that right?"

"I am gifted with that remarkable power," answered Mystero modestly.

"Could you fix it so we can talk to a dead man and you not know anything about it?"

"Very easily, Sir," answered the medium.

"You understand we don't tell you who the guy is, or nothin'?"

"It will not be necessary to tell me anything," Mystero assured him. "What you want is a slate message, and that can be had while I am out of the room."

"What's a slate message?" demanded the short man suspiciously.

"Why, your departed friend, whoever he is, will communicate with you by writing on a slate," answered Mystero.

"Who does the writing?"

"Your friend of course."

"And where are you while he's doing it?"

"I shall leave the room. You and your companion will be absolutely alone."

"Humph!" grunted the other doubtfully. "It sounds like a fairy tale, but if you can do it, I guess it's what we're lookin' for. We don't want any monkey-work about this, though," he added threateningly.

"You need have no fear of that," smiled Mystero, as he rose from the chair. "If you will be seated we will proceed at once."

He indicated a plain deal table at one side of the room, around which were several chairs.

His sitters seated themselves nervously and watched the medium narrowly while he placed several sheets of writing paper, an envelope, and a pencil before them.

"You are to write on this paper the questions you desire to ask your departed friend," he instructed them. "When you have finished writing, seal the communication in this envelope and do not let it out of your sight for an instant."

"Not if we know it!" broke in the tall man angrily. "We don't write nothin' that—"

"Aw shut yer trap!" interrupted the short man. "Didn't he say to seal it up in the envelope and watch it? How's he goin' to see it, eh?"

"I don't like it," retorted the other uneasily. "There's some trick about it."

"Trick nothin'! If he tries anything like that we'll break his neck! I won't stand for no foolin' myself, you understand that?" he growled to the medium.

"I never have to resort to trickery," answered Mystero with great dignity. "If you care to continue, write out your communication as I have directed, otherwise I will bid you both good evening."

"All right, beat it out o' here," growled the short man.

Mystero retreated to the room adjoining and closed the door.

The two men whispered together for several minutes. It was evident that the tall one was decidedly averse to proceeding with the sitting, while his companion strongly urged it. Finally, seeming to reach an agreement, the latter picked up the pencil and started writing.

He was some time in preparing the letter, but it was finally finished and sealed, and the two sat back and looked about expectantly.

As if informed by an unseen agency, Mystero immediately came from the other room, bearing on his left arm a large slate, on which rested a number of smaller ones.

"You have finished your letter," he said briskly. "Now, gentlemen, you will kindly examine these slates and see that there is no writing on them."

With his right hand he began removing the smaller slates from his arm, handing them to the sitters one at a time, for inspection. As fast as they were examined he placed them together in the center of the table, so that when they had finished there was a stack of seven or eight small slates before them. Mystero still retained the large slate on his left forearm.

"Now place your letter on the top slate," he instructed, designating those

on the table. "What for?" demanded the short man suspiciously.

"In order to get the vibrations," answered Mystero vaguely. "Rest assured however that I shall not touch it."

The short man placed the letter as ordered, not without reluctance, and Mystero immediately covered it by placing the large slate on top of the stack.

With a muttered exclamation the short man seized the slate, jerking it away and snatching the letter from the small slates.

"You don't come anything like that on me!" he growled angrily. "You said this letter wasn't to leave my sight for an instant!"

"But you knew right where it was all the time," expostulated Mystero. "You interfere with the vibrations when you act this way."

"I don't know nothin' about yer vibrations, but I do know this letter ain't goin' out of my sight," retorted the other. "I'm goin' to burn it up right now!"

"All right, burn it," agreed Mystero. "Crumple it up and place it on the slates, and then light it with this match; that will create the vibrations as well as the way I intended."

The short man followed Mystero's instructions with evident relief. They watched the flame consume the letter as it lay crumpled on the small slates, and the two sitters heaved a sigh of relief as the blaze flickered out.

"There!" grunted the tall man. "I don't reckon you'll read that now!"

"It isn't necessary that I should," Mystero assured him cheerfully. "It is your departed friend, not I, who is answering your questions. We will now proceed with the sitting—or, wait—let me get rid of these ashes."

He picked up the two top slates and walked to the fireplace, where he shook off the burnt paper, returning immediately to the table and replacing the slates.

"Now place your hands on these slates," he instructed them. "Wait until you hear writing, and when it stops, examine your slates for the message."

The two men did as they were directed with sheepish expressions, half convinced that they were being made fools of by the medium. The latter picked up the large slate and again retired to the inner room.

For perhaps twenty minutes they remained in position without getting any results, and then they began to grow restless and finally summoned the medium. He came into the room carrying the large slate in his left hand.

"Haven't you had a communication yet?" he asked in surprise.

"No!" snapped the tall man shortly.

"Well, that's strange! The spirits are usually very prompt! Let us look and see if there isn't a message after all!"

The men removed their hands from the slates and Mystero began picking them up, one at a time, examining both sides for writing and then laying them down at his left. When he had looked at four of the slates and found them blank, he carelessly placed the large slate on top of those he had examined while he proceeded to look over the others.

"Well, now, this is queer!" he exclaimed, knitting his brows with perplexity. "It may be that they couldn't generate force enough; let us try again and I will help."

Removing the large slate and laying it to one side, Mystero stacked the others in the center of the the table and all three men placed their hands on them.

In a few minutes the sound of writing was distinctly heard, coming apparently from the pile of slates. This startled the two sitters out of the lethargy into which they had both fallen,

and they sat upright, watching the medium narrowly. Mystero was sitting quiet and unconcerned, with both hands on the slates, and did not seem to notice the others' agitation.

After an interval of about five minutes the sound of writing ceased. Mystero shuddered, as if shaking off a spell, and stood up.

"I guess you've got your message all right this time," he informed the sitters wearily. "I will leave the room while you look."

He went out, and the others turned to the slates eagerly. Much to their astonishment they found the fourth slate from the top completely covered with writing on one side.

"Well, now, what do you know about that, Buff!" ejaculated the short man triumphantly. "Didn't I tell you I knew these guys!"

"It gets me," answered the tall man in awed voice. "What does it read?"

Eagerly they bent over the slate and read the message. Whatever it was the information seemed to be very gratifying—particularly to the short man.

"Didn't I tell you, Buff!" he whispered excitedly. "It'll be a cinch!"

"We can't do it," frowned the other. "It ain't safe toting that box through the streets; we'll get the chair if we're pinched with the evidence right on us."

"Aw, we'll hire a livery rig and bring it here easy. You ain't got no nerve, Buff; we can't pass up a hundred thousand plunks just because you're afraid of gettin' pinched; It's our last chance, anyhow; we've tried everything else!"

For several minutes they argued in whispers, the short man urging and the tall one dissenting. At last the latter yielded.

"All right, I'll take the chance if you will," he agreed. "I think we're taking darn fool chances for all that, though."

The short man summoned Mystero from the other room. As the medium entered he began eagerly.

"Say, we've got to come back here again tonight! We're goin' to bring a package with us, see? Our friend is to help us out on a deal, and it won't won't take but a few minutes!"

"It is nearly midnight," expostulated Mystero. "Put it off until tomorrow."

"We can't! It's got to be done tonight! We'll pay you extra for your trouble!"

"Oh, well, if it is so important as that," agreed the medium wearily. "But hurry, please. I am very tired."

"We'll be back in an hour," the other assured him. "There's a hundred in this for you, if it works," he added with a burst of generosity.

Mystero saw them out the door, and as he returned to the seance room he chuckled softly to himself.

"There'll be a hundred in it for me, eh?" he murmured. "There'll be more than that, my buckos, or I'll know the reason why!"

Mystero went straight to the telephone and called up the police headquarters.

"Is detective Flynn in?" he asked, when his summons were answered.

"He is," came the reply.

"I should like to speak to him, please."

"Hello," came a gruff voice through the receiver a few seconds later.

"Flynn? Yes? This is Mystero, the medium. I would like to have you come out to my house, 826 Bagg Street, right away."

"What for?" asked the rough voice.

"I can't explain over the 'phone. It is very important and concerns a case you are working on."

"All right," agreed the voice. "I'll be right out."

Mystero hung up the receiver and looked about the room perplexedly.

"I'll have to fix things so they can't

make a quick get-away in case they scent trouble," he muttered. "Ah, I have it."

He hurried across the room to a spot near the door and lifted up one of the small rugs with which the floor was covered. He scanned the bare boards for a moment, nodded to himself approvingly and hurried into the other room, returning shortly with a hammer and several large wire nails.

From the front doorstep he brought in the woven wire door-mat, which he fitted in the bare spot on the floor. Through one corner at each end of the mat he drove a long wire nail, and then hurried into the cellar. In five mintes he had connected the nails from below with two of the numerous electric wires that were strung about the basement, and had again returned to the seance room. Here he covered the wire mat with a thin piece of wet black cloth, removing the rug to the other room.

"There," he muttered in a tone of satisfaction. "If they get that box out of here again, they'll be dandies."

Five minutes later the bell in the arm chair again tinkled faintly. This time however, Mystero gave no heed, until the regular doorbell rang; then he answered the ring in person.

"Ah, good evening, Flynt," he exclaimed to the man on the doorstep. "Come right in."

Flynt followed the medium into the seance room wonderingly.

"Well, what is it?" he demanded gruffly.

"You are working on the Estes case," began Mystero pleasantly, as he motioned the detective to a chair before resuming his own.

"Yes."

"I think I can be of assistance in apprehending the murderers, if—if satisfactory remuneration is forthcoming," said Mystero suggestively.

Detective Flynt glared belligerently at the medium.

"By putting me into communication with Estes, himself, I presume," he sneered derisively. "Fifty cents and trimmings, eh? Say, if you called me way down here for this—"

"You're mistaken," Mystero interrupted him hastily. "I don't expect to serve you in a professional capacity, although I will admit that I have made use of my occult powers in detecting the criminals."

"You mean that you know who they are?" asked the detective eagerly.

"Not exactly," answered Mystero evasively. "What I know is this: The most sensational case the police have had to contend with for years is the murder of the late James Estes, the millionaire inventor. Mr. Estes was the discoverer of 'New Process Steel.' It was his crowning invention. He succeeded in producing a steel so hard that a cold chisel turned on it like a tin knife blade against iron. It is as impervious to heat as platinum, and Mr. Estes defied any one to produce an explosive that would shatter it.

"Mr. Estes' vanity led him to construct a freak safe, shaped like half a globe, in which he placed one hundred thousand dollars in currency, and offered the safe and contents to any one who would open it in his presence. He advertised the offer extensively, and, as you must know, it caused considerable newspaper comment.

"The public was invited to open the safe any way they saw fit. They could blow it open with nitro glycerine, cut it open or melt it down, and Mr. Estes agreed to replace the contents in case they were destroyed.

"The inventor's confidence in his invention was his ultimate undoing. The fact that the safe contained a large sum

of money, and that it weighed, with its contents, less than three hundred pounds, was known to everybody. It is not unnatural that it excited the cupidity of the 'Under World'—"

"I know all this," interrupted the detective impatiently. "A couple of them croaked Estes in his library one night and got away with the safe. Do you know who they were?"

"I believe I can deliver them into your hands, if, as I stated before, satisfactory remuneration is forthcoming."

"What do you want?"

"The reward offered is five thousand dollars for the apprehension of the murderers and recovery of the safe. I'll accomplish both, with your assistance, for half that sum."

"When?"

"Tonight."

Flynt stared at him incredulously.

"I don't believe it," he growled. "I've been working on this case for a month, and haven't uncovered a clue, and now you've got the gall to come forward with this proposition! What's your game, anyhow?"

"Just what I told you. I'll place the men in your hands, together with the safe for one half the reward," answered Mystero quietly.

"All right, lead me to 'em," grinned Flynt derisively.

"Ill lead them to you," smiled the medium. "We'll just put this thing in writing and then we'll be ready for the next act."

Mystero wrote out a contract, calling for one-half the reward if he succeeded in delivering the criminals, the safe, and irrefutable evidence of guilt into the detective's hands before morning. Flynt signed the document with reluctance, for he was still half convinced that the medium was working some game on him, if, indeed, not making a fool of him.

There was a rattle of buggy wheels in the street outside. Mystero ran into the front room and peered out the window, returning immediately, and motioning the detective toward some black cloth curtains that hung across one corner of the room.

"Get into that materializing cabinet and keep quiet," he directed hurriedly. "Keep your eyes on me through the slit in the curtain and don't come out until I call you."

Flynt, half in doubt as to whether he should obey or not, entered the cabinet. He was hardly inside when the chair bell tinkled, and an instant later the door-bell rang.

Mystero hurried into the hall. Flynt heard a door open and slam, and immediately after Mystero reentered the room followed by two men, who bore between them a heavy burden wrapped in a blanket. They carried the object by iron handles, that protruded through slits cut in the blanket.

"Put it right here," suggested Mystero, indicating the spot on the floor where the wire doormat lay concealed under the thin black cloth.

The men, puffing from the exertion, put the object down promptly, not noticing the cloth in the semi-gloom. As they did so, Mystero, who had crossed the room, pulled down a small switch on the wall. This move was unnoticed by the others.

The medium switched on more bulbs, flooding the room with bright light for the first time. As he did so the other two faced about toward the cabinet, and an ejaculation of astonishment came from that direction.

The newcomers started violently and glared in the direction of the sound.

"What was that!" gasped the short man.

"I heard nothing," answered the medium, his voice denoting dismay, in spite of his efforts to control it.

"You lie!" hissed the short man angrily. "There's some one behind them curtains!"

He strode fearlessly forward and jerked aside the hangings, disclosing the astonished detective, who had evidently betrayed his presence in the room by his ejaculation of surprise when he recognized the men.

"Flynt!" gasped the short man, starting back.

"It's a plant, Bill! It's a plant!" shouted the tall one, as he sprang toward the medium. "They've got us and the swag, too, if we don't get them!"

The detective, realizing that a fight was inevitable, sprang toward the short man, but his foot caught in the trailing curtain, throwing him heavily to the floor, before he could get a grip on the other.

Before he could rise the short man jerked a billy from his pocket and brought it down with stunning force on the back of the detective's head. Flynt straightened out without a sound and lay still.

In the meantime the tall man had grappled with the medium. Mystero was small but wiry, and would have quickly bested his antagonist had not the short man sprang to the other's assistance.

A blow from the billy loosened Mystero's grip on the tall man's throat and dropped him to the floor beside the detective.

"There, you damn fool!" panted the tall man, glaring at his companion. "Now see what you got us into with your spook doctor! I had a hunch all along that this thing wasn't straight, but o' course you had to see it through! Did you croak Flynt?"

"I don't know," answered the other sullenly. "I hit hard. We ain't got time to find out. Let's get that box into the buggy and make a get-away before they come to."

"Huh! Damn fine chance we got, now that Flynt's got us spotted! We'll have to blow the town!"

"Shut yer trap and come on," growled the other. "They'll be alive in a minute!"

The two men sprang across the room to the object they had carried in. Simultaneously they seized onto the iron handles to lift it up, and as simultaneously they both emitted loud howls of pain and alarm.

The subsequent antics of the two would have been both surprising and amusing to an onlooker, ignorant of the reasons for their behavior.

Bent half double by their grip on the iron handles and unable to straighten up, they nevertheless danced a merry can-can, accompanied by whoops of agony and surprise that would have aroused the envy of a wild Indian war dance.

Mystero sat up slowly, gazed at the struggling men with a dazed expression, and then grinned feebly.

Some one, evidently attracted by the racket inside, was hammering at the front door, and the medium rose to his feet and staggered into the hall. A moment later he had opened the door and admitted a patrolman.

"What's coming off here?" demanded the officer.

"I've got a couple of burglars doing a bunny-hug with the late Mr. Estes' safe," answered Mystero, as he led the way back into the seance room.

The late seekers after occult knowledge were still clinging fast to the iron handle and howling diligently. The officer started toward them.

"Don't touch them!" shouted Mystero in alarm.

"Why not?" inquired the officer. "They're making too much noise!"

"They're charged with enough elec-

tricity to run a street car," the medium answered. "If you touch them before I cut off the current, you'll be making a lot of noise, too!"

A loud groan caused them to turn in the direction of the cabinet. The detective had sat up and was staring dizzily around the room.

"Flynt!" cried the patrolman in astonishment, springing to the detective and assisting him to his feet. "What's the matter?"

"The roof fell on me, judging by the way my head feels," answered Flynt, gingerly rubbing the back of his scalp. "What's the matter with those guys?" he asked, pointing toward the two men, who were still frantically endeavoring to free themselves from the electrically charged safe.

"They seem to be having a nice little time all by themselves," answered the officer. "I don't know why, though."

"If you are sufficiently recovered from the wallop the short man gave you I'll turn off the current and give you a chance to find out," said Mystero to the detective. "We'll be saving the chair a job if we don't hurry."

Acting on his suggestion, the two officers stationed themselves beside the men while the medium threw over the switch. As the current released their hands from the iron handles the men dropped to the floor in an exhausted condition, so that the officers met with no resistance whatever in handcuffing them.

"Gee, you're easy, Pete," grinned the detective, poking the short man in the ribs with the toe of his boot.

The other groaned loudly and retorted with that stereotyped phrase of the criminal: "What're you puttin' the cuffs on me for? I ain't done nothin'."

"That remains to be seen," chuckled the detective. "Now, Mystero," he continued, turning to the medium, "what's all this about? Are these the men that done for Estes?"

"They are," averred the medium. "I have irrefutable evidence to that end."

Mystero took a letter from his coat pocket and held it out to Flynt, who accepted it wonderingly.

"What's this?" he inquired.

"That is virtually a written confession from these fellows that they are the murderers of Mr. Estes. It seems that after they got away with his freak safe they found themselves in a quandary. They could not open the safe, try as they would. They worked for a month without avail, and were about to give up in disgust when this short man happened to read my advertisement in the paper, and hit upon the plan of getting into communication with the spirit of Mr. Estes, and learning, if possible, the secret of opening the safe. It was a forlorn hope, but their last resort.

"Therefore they called on me tonight to see what could be done. My psychic faculties at once apprised me of their mission, and I determined to capture them and earn the five thousand dollars reward offered for their apprehension. I realized however, that my word alone would not be accepted as convincing, and cast about for more substantial evidence.

"I therefore had them write out just what they desired on several sheets of paper, and seal it in an envelope. It is virtually a complete confession of their guilt, and will substantiate everything I have told you. It is the letter you now hold in your hand Mr. Flynt."

"You lie!" shouted the short man. "I burned that letter up!"

"You thought you did," smiled Mystero. "If your eyes had been a little sharper you might have noticed that I tricked you."

Turning to the table, Mystero picked up a large slate he had previously used, and one of the smaller ones. Taking

the letter from Flynt he placed it on the small slate and covered it with the large one, which effectually concealed it.

"When they had finished their letter I requested them to place it on this stack of slates," he said, indicating the small slates on the table. "When they had done so, I merely dropped this large slate, with the smaller one underneath, onto the stack. The short man immediately snatched it off again and seized what he believed was his letter, but which was, in fact, merely a dummy; the real letter being under the top small slate. I then had him burn the letter, by his own suggestion, and when I carried the two top plates to the fireplace to get rid of the ashes, I had no difficulty whatever in extracting the real letter from between them.

"I then placed the sitters in position to receive their supposed message from Estes, while I retired to the other room, where I opened and read the letter, and determined on a line of action. I prepared an answer for them on a small slate, which I concealed under the large slate, and dropped this on top of the stack when the opportunity presented itself, writing side down.

"In this message I had Estes thank them for helping him into the next world, and advise them that it would be necessary to bring the safe here in order to open it, assuring them that they were welcome to the contents. You can see that they followed out the suggestions explicitly."

"Mystero, you old faker," laughed Flynt, slapping the medium on the back, "this is about as clever a piece of work as I ever saw pulled off! Rest assured that you will get your share of the reward."

"Thank you," answered Mystero with dignity. "Please remember, however, that I am not a fakir, and that I never resort to trickery except where it is necessary in order to convince stupid minions of the law of the substantiality of my claims."

In Committee

BY GERALD MORGAN

A quick witted assemblyman passes a good bill over a bitter opponent by a timely and ghastly exhibit. This is a powerful and timely piece of writing.

HIRAM P. SLEIGHT introduced the Enamelling Bill in the lower house. Sleight was the assemblyman from Iroquois County. He was known as Beeswax Sleight, on account of the yellow color of his complexion, acquired—so his enemies said—through a lifetime spent in political back rooms. They referred to his complexion as "Sleight's electrical tan."

In advocating the bill, Mr. Sleight said that it purposed to alleviate conditions among the Enamelling workers. It was, in short, a labor bill. Incidentally, Mr. Sleight wished to declare that there was no man in the whole length and breadth of the United States more proud than he to grasp the hand of a laboring man, more desirous to improve——

The assembly yawned. They knew that this speech was for home consumption, and suspected that it was already bumping over the ties on its way to Sleigth's local newspaper in Iroquois County.

Mr. Sleight was a dominant member of the dominant Republican Party. So when he had finished his speech, the Assemblyman promptly passed his bill.

In due course of events the Enamelling Bill appeared in the State Senate, where it was referred to the committee of which Senator Elijah Cookingham was chairman, and which was pretty generally known as "Cookingham's Cemetery."

Two days later Senator John Y. Sanders, majority leader, lounged into Cookingham's committee room.

"About that there Enamelling Bill," he said; "you want to tuck it up comfy, Lije, 'cause it's going to have a nice long sleep."

Senator Cookingham grunted. "Old Beeswax up to his old tricks again, hey?" he said.

To neither of these two statesmen did further explanation appear necessary. Senator Sanders lounged out without another word.

But within a week he was back again. "About that there Enamelling Bill, Lije," he began, querulously. "Say, what do you know about Old Beeswax, anyway! Always gettin' us to do his dirty work for him, so as he can make a little dirty political capital. Now he says he don't want you to have any hearings on this here bill."

"Beeswax can go chase himself," replied Senator Cookingham calmly. "We got to have hearings. He knows that as well as I do. Hearings don't matter anyhow."

"Well, be a good feller, and tell him so yourself," said Sanders.

"I will," replied Cookingham. "And by the way, John, I guess I'll have to to have a look at the bill. Must be some dynamite in it somewhere."

From its carefully indexed cubby-hole Senator Cookingham withdrew the bill. He turned its pages with a practiced eye. Finally he whistled, shuffled one or two of the middle sheets, yawned, and then stopped like a dog on a point. "..And

prohibit the use of tanium," he said, reading aloud.

He turned to his secretary. "Willie," he said, quietly, "go on round to the state chemist's office and find out what tanium is."

The Senator drummed on the table and waited for his secretary's return. Once or twice he grinned, for no one could find a nigger in a woodpile any quicker than he.

The secretary came back, and handed him a short slip of paper. On it was written: "Tanium—rare mineral poison—commercially useless." The Senator grinned again. "One on the state chemist," he meditated. "They've found a use for it now. Willie—," He turned to his secretary, "I'm going out and I don't know when I'll be back."

Senator Cookingham walked directly and briskly to the family hotel where Hiram P. Sleight made his headquarters during the session. The senator found him in his bedroom, sorting letters.

"You're just the man I wanted to see, Lije," said Mr. Sleight.

"I know," replied the Senator. "I understand you don't want us to have any hearings on your Enamelling Bill. How about it, Hiram? Come across."

The assemblyman leisurely tore up a letter.

"The Company's got a plant at a small place called Oak Branch, in my district," he began, meditatively.

"Kinder out of the way for an industrial concern?" suggested Mr. Cookingham.

"Quite," replied the assemblyman.

He tore up another letter. "They're good Republicans," he added.

"I see," said Mr. Cookingham.

"Well," the assemblyman went on, "once in a while a workman gets sick, or dies, or something."

"Company get local labor?" asked the Senator.

"Hell, no," replied Mr. Sleight. "They're Polacks."

"No votes?" inquired Cookingham.

"Not a vote," continued Sleight. "But there's a young squirt lawyer called Martin, who has an office at Oak Branch once a week. And there's a local doctor. They've been kicking up a little row."

"Arousin' class feelin'," suggested the Senator.

"They're a couple of agitators," replied Mr. Sleight, vindictively. "That's what I call 'em, agitators! They're the ones that want the hearing. You don't want to give 'em a hearing, Lije. All you got to do is to wait till they get down here, and then postpone a couple of weeks, and repeat the dose once or twice. It's six-and-a-half hours from Oak Branch, and they'll soon come to their senses."

"I guess we got to give 'em a hearing, Hiram," said the Senator, quietly.

"Don't you do it!" exclaimed Mr. Sleight.

"What do you think our committee is?" replied the Senator, shortly. "A populist convention? Do you expect us to get stampeded?"

"Well, don't you believe what they say, anyway," said Sleight.

"That's different again," said the Senator.

"All right," concluded Mr. Sleight. "Let me know. I'll be there. I'll be supposed to support them anarchists, you understand."

"You'll be advised," said the Senator. "So long, Hiram."

He walked slowly home, considering. On his way he met the Senate leader, John Y. Sanders. He stopped him.

"John," he said, "I've just seen Beeswax. I told him we would have to have a hearing on that Enamelling Bill of his. Just drop in when we have it. I'll let you know."

"What for?" asked Sanders.

"Fireworks, I expect," replied Cookingham. "I've got a hunch this business may need a little bit of handling."

"All right," Sanders said. "But I don't understand."

"Neither do I," replied Cookingham, slowly; "at least not quite yet."

His next morning's mail contained two letters which were no surprise to Senator Cookingham. One was a short note, dated Oak Branch, requesting a hearing on the Enamelling Bill at the committee's convenience. It was signed "Stephen Martin." The other, from a firm of Albany lawyers, stated that they had been retained in the Enamelling matter by the company involved, and asked that they be informed of the time and place of any hearing, provided such hearing was to be granted.

In reply, Senator Cookingham wrote four short letters, naming an hour for a private hearing. The letters were sent to Martin, Sleight, the Albany lawyers, and Senator Sanders.

On the date set the full committee met. The room was a small one. Cookingham, as chairman, sat at the desk, the four committeemen seated, or rather lounging, about him. All four were dependable men; the two minority Democrats could be trusted, in the chairman's language, not to "make a stink." As for the Republicans, they were of the variety known as "old war horses."

In front of the desk, to the right, sat the Albany lawyer; next to him, his back to the wall, stood Senator Sanders, in his mouth a dead cigar.

On the left was Assemblyman Sleight, a grin, meant to be genial, on his yellow face. He had spoken to each committeeman beforehand, and knew where he stood. He was talking to young Martin, and to an old, bearded country doctor whom Martin had brought with him. He was explaining to them that he was here merely in a private capacity. Law, and the etiquette of the legislature, demanded that he should lend only his moral support to the bill before a Senatorial committee.

The lawyer for the company read a written statement. He said his clients had no objections to any of the provisions of the bill, except to that one prohibiting the use of tanium. The enamelling industry could not be conducted without this harmless mineral. The very simplest precautions exempted the laborers from all dangers in this regard. Even when such precautions were unheeded, he had no hesitation in saying, ill effects were mild and temporary.

He called attention to the statistics of the company's hospital—a free hospital, by the way. There had been seven deaths, not one traceable to tanium poisoning. The truth of the matter was this—the Polish laborers, in their ignorance, had come to believe that every indigestion, every touch of rheumatism, was due to tanium poisoning; and this belief had been fostered by two men—a local lawyer without clients, and a local doctor without patients.

Mr. Martin then rose. He wished to read an Affidavit by Dr. Clark, here present. Dr. Clark had treated, medically, many of the company's employees and would personally swear to the truth of the ensuing statement. Martin began to read.

For fifteen minutes he continued in a dull, unmodulated voice. There was scarcely a word comprehensible to any one except a medical practitioner. The committeemen yawned. Sleight grinned. The Albany lawyer looked up through half-closed eyes as if in pity of such an ineffective exhibition. Sanders, who had had other things to do, frowned at the chairman. Near the conclusion, the doctor quietly

opened the door and went out.

"Is that all?" asked Senator Cookingham.

There was a knock at the door. "Just one second," Martin said. He stepped outside.

Beeswax Sleight looked around at the committee, and laughed out loud. The others, all but Cookingham, grinned back. Then the door of the committee room reopened.

Martin and the doctor came back, walking slowly, supporting between them, what had once been a man. His face, below his eyes, was wrapped in bandages. A whole head taller than the other two, his feet and ankles rattled on the floor like the appendages of a wooden doll. But Martin and the doctor supported his gigantic frame with ease; there was little to hold up but bones and the vanishing spark of life.

"This man was poisoned by tanium," Martin said.

The four committeemen sat, their smiles petrified like a pugilist's. The Albany lawyer hugged the wall. Sanders looked down at his feet.

Sleight moved first, as though to get behind the chairman's desk. Then Martin spoke again.

"I'll just take this off," he said quietly. "The man has no jaw."

And his hand moved up toward the man's head.

Then in one instant Sleight paid up the arrears of twenty sessions.

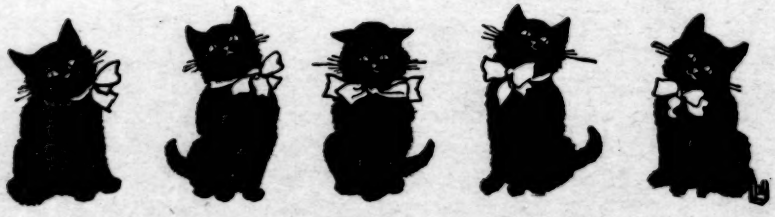
"Oh, God!" he cried, "leave on the bandages! Leave on the bandages!" And slipping down into his chair, he covered his face with both his hands.

It was Saunders who spoke first. "Don't do that, Mr. Martin," he said, quietly. "Your bill is passed. I think you had better go." He stepped across to the door and opened it.

Martin turned.

"May God have mercy on your soul, Hiram Sleight," he said.

Then they went out.



The Shrieker of Shurwar Toda

BY BLAIR JAEKEL

Here's a creepy tale from far away India. Two sailors start out to solve the mystery of gruesome shrieks that have preyed on the superstitious folk of the country. Before their investigations end one of them finds he is rattling family skeletons.

LET some people read a magazine article treating of—well, of the recent ravages in our midst of the double-barreled pip, for example, and they will have every known symptom within the hour, and a lot more that the magazine men forgot.

Danny Nagle was of this type, despite his gun-pointing proclivities, by virtue of which number two turret on his Uncle Sammy's first-class battleship *California* displayed a conspicuous capital E between the weapons

Danny had an imagination. Given the proper incentive and climatic conditions, inside of fifteen minutes he could imagine himself the unfortunate possessor of more symptoms of something, anything, than the most mercenary landlubbing diagnostician could concoct in a week.

He and Hughey McFetridge, just come ashore from His Majesty's ship *Southern Cross,* on a three day's liberty, sat one afternoon on opposite sides of a bamboo table in a Bombay teahouse absorbing frequent draughts of local atmosphere and liquid refreshment. The slant-eyed heathen detailed to set right on the broad and shady road to Tophet all salt-stained patrons of the place, had stood over Hughey and counted out change for a spurious sovereign given in payment of divers beverages. This furnished a convenient topic of conversation.

"He knows that was a counterfeit yeller-belly, he does, the lousey loafer," said Hughey, twitching a crooked thumb in the direction of the ambling coolie. "It's the third I've passed since I've been in the bloomin' port, and I hopes it'll be the lawst. Always gives me a sort of a queer sensation trying to get rid of them. It's a blessing for us that mostly the blooming shopkeepers taikes them from the milit'ry and pawses them off on the blooming trotters.

"Greatest country fer counterfeiters I ever stopped ashore at," Hughey continued in further explanation. "Half th' blooming populaition's at it, and maikes a good livin' at it, too. Why, just a daiy or two back I was a-reading in the paiper where they nipped a whole gang of them as was a-maiking these here yeller-bellies up 'round Delhi som'res. Got their time, every blawsted one of them, and in short order; but d'you think the perlice ever piped their layout? Naw! Too foxy, them fellers. Heaven only knows where they done their blooming business—'round in the hills som'res, most likely."

Whereupon Danny promptly suffered a symptom. He emptied the contents of his Bull Durham money purse upon the table and fell to weighing and clinking the coins suspiciously. Not that he mistrusted the paymaster—oh, not that, but just to kind of diagnose his financial condition.

"Going back aboard again this evening?" asked Hughey.

"Nope," said Danny, not looking up;

"Going t' Del-hoi t' see me brether Ambrose."

"Bound up that waiy m'self, matey," Hughey admitted. "Tie alongside of me first for a while, and I'll cruise with you to Delhi. Never seen the plaice, and I've been bumming around in these here blooming waters for more'n a year. What's your brother doing s' far from the Staites, may I awsk? 'Spose his mother knows he's out?"

"Search me," said Danny. "Ambrose's like a squall in th' doldrums—here t'day an' there t'morrer, an' as th' Good Book siz, 'no man knoweth whince he cometh or whither he lissens.' Oi only run acrost him once in me first three years at sea—in Noo York whin we was outfittin' for th' Chinese station. He told me as how he was a-spindin' his winters in Californy, and be th' cut of his hair Oi belaved him—in San Quentin, as a guist o' th' Commonwealth. Yis, Oi allus had me misgivin's about Ambrose.

"Thin all of a suddin Oi gits a letter from him postmarked Del-hoi, sayin' as how he was makin' all koinds of filthy loocre. So Oi wrote him t' th' gineral deliv'ry in Del-hoi, tellin' him Oi'd run up t' see him an' maybe borrer a couple o' yen from him th' minute me ship got 'round this far from Olongopo. Th' consul'll know where he's hangin' out.

"But fer all Ambrose's me brether on me mother's soide," Danny ran on, shunting his wealth back into the tobacco bag, "th' thought o' seein' him often affects me peculiar. Sometoimes Oi love him; sometoimes Oi hate him. Sometoimes Oi belave Oi'd cruise half way 'round th' worrld t' git a peek at him; sometoimes Oi wouldn't buy a cocynut from him if he paddled out 'longsoide th' ship in a bumboat. Queer how oi takes me suddin' loikin' and disloikin's t' Ambrose. Can't 'count fer ut. What's *your* propysition?"

"My proposition?" repeated Hughey, aroused from the double lethargic influence of his ambrosial cups and Danny's glib prattle about his famous brother. "Listen: Half waiy between here and Delhi there's a lot of old Buddhist temples that me and matey's been a-planning to visit ever since we been a-cruising in these here polluted waters. They stretches out under the hills for miles and miles. Parts of them is deep under ground and big as a arsenal. They're the sights of the naighborhood, they are. But matey goes and gets his liberty took awaiy from him, the rotter, and here I am ashore alone by myself, and afflicted with onooy for the want of something exciting. We'll make a night of eating the lotus, you and me, and then we'll sail on the early Bombaiy and Central trayn for a plaice called Dhanera. Then we'll disembark and hire a naitive cart to transport us the five knots across country to Shurwar Toda where the temples is locaited."

"Oi couldn't put up in a whole night eatin' th' lettuce," interrupted Danny; "Oi don't loike ut."

"Listen, now," Hughey went on. "Coming back we'll stop the night at Dhanera; then next morning we'll taike the saime trayn as we come up on for Delhi and spend a nice week-end with brother Ambrose. What d' you saiy?"

Danny responded by rattling his cup in his saucer to attract the coolie's attention.

"What'll ye have fer a starter?" he suggested, slyly.

Long before Danny and Hughey had put on the finishing touches they clubbed together and chartered a coolie to cruise around near them throughout the celebration, come what might, and see that they got safely aboard the north-bound Bombay and Central train next morning. The Hindu proved a wise and zealous convoy, and to him reverts the credit of

having put a first profitable fare in several months in the way of a certain Dhaneran bullock driver.

But however profitable the trip happened to pan out for the driver, financially, it proved equally unprofitable for his patrons, temperamentally, for the roads were rough, and the bed of the springless wooden-wheeled cart was anything but comfortable. To make matters infinitely worse, the highway to Shurwar Toda was as a pane of plate glass to a sheet of sand paper compared with the trail from the little village to the temples. Up hill and down they labored along across the ancient lava beds in the wake of a native cicerone.

"There she blows," cried Hughey, a bit out of breath, as they emerged suddenly from the depths of a heavy thicket like a pair of clowns trying to jump through the same paper hoop.

"There what blows?" queried Danny, blinking in the bright sun.

"The temple of Shurwar Toda—right ahead of you; cawn't you see it?"

"Oi se a poile o' battered up buildin' blocks," gasped Danny, disgusted. "Be th' beard o' Saint Patrick, ye don't call that a timple, now, do ye? Oi thought ut was sumpin' gorgeous ye was a-takin' me t' see."

"They saiy it's the finest ruin in India," explained the Britisher, proudly. "Maybe it's two thousand years old."

"Ut looks ivery year of its age," nodded Danny, "but ut ain't worth riskin' loife an' limb fer six moiles in that perepatetick dry-land derelick we come acrost country in."

"Let's pipe the blooming interior," Hughey suggested, spilling himself down over the rocks to attain the level of the ground floor of the temple.

Danny followed under protest.

They passed through the massive portals and, while Hughey seemed to be admiring the loftiness of the vestibule, Danny heaved a stone at a great black buzzard as it swung gracefully under the architrave and flapped its way beyond the danger zone. As they advanced gingerly into the vague and gloomy interior, a lizard scooted across the floor in front of them. The air inside was damp and fetid. Hughey stumbled over the skull of an animal and commenced to curse appropriately.

"Hist! Hughey, lissen a minute," Danny whispered softly, inclining his ear.

Hughey listened.

What he heard was a deep sort of a gurgling sound that made his epidermis resemble that of a plucked plover. It came, apparently, from one of the many caves of the subterranean apartments connected with the main temple by a long dark corridor.

The men shot furtive glances at each other and both retreated, by common consent, stealthily toward the door.

The sound grew steadily in volume, its pitch gaining height in proportion to its growth. Soon it developed into a weird, siren-like shriek, that echoed and reverberated around the walls of the ghostly old edifice as if emitted by some frightened prehistoric bird trying to find an exit in the darkness. Then it ceased abruptly, and the cavernous temple became as supernaturally silent as the inside of a mausoleum.

The Hindu guide, having dropped his candles where he had stood, was doing a very fair imitation of a gemsbok trying to outdistance a Roosveltian bullet.

"What wus ut, matey?" asked Danny, regaining in a measure, his power of speech.

The Britisher swallowed quite audibly once or twice. "The Lord only knows; I don't," he managed to stutter.

"Oi nivver heard th' loikes of ut."

"Nor I."

"Let's sit down a minute an' wait fer

another yelp," Danny suggested. "Oi don't belave inny of th' nagers 'round here ivver took th' trouble to hear ut twicet."

They seated themselves upon the fallen capital of one of the great columns in the vestibule, and waited.

In less than five minutes the hollow, gutteral sound commenced its rumbling way down the same dark corridor and out into the scarcely less Stygian blackness of the temple itself. It waxed in volume and harshness, as before, and terminated as suddenly in the same gloom piercing scream.

The moment it stopped Danny glanced at his watch. When it started again he noted the time. They waited for one, two, three more "yelps," and Danny in each instance caught the length of the silent interval.

"That ain't no animal," he said, "an ut ain't no human bein'."

"Why?" Hughey squinted at him with unalloyed interest.

"Well, in th' first place," Danny explained, "there ain't no animal built t' run be clock worrk so's he can screech that way ivvery siven minutes an' a quarter. In th' second place, there ain't no human bein' as is goin' t' set there all day, an' all night, too, fer as much as we know, with a Ingersoll in his right mitten jist fer th' simple satisfaction o' makin' a screech at rigular intervals. An' in th' third place, there ain't no animal, nor no human bein' neither, as can screech loike that, inyhow. Oi tell ye its mechanic." Here the gun-pointer stood up and gave his breeches a determined hitch. "An Oi intind t' foind out about ut, or bust me A string. Are ye wid me, matey?"

"I am, soon as I cut me some kind of a bludgeon," Hughey replied, suiting the action to the threat, while Danny picked up the candles the Hindu had dropped in his flight.

As they re-entered the temple, the ear-splitting wail sounded again, and they followed its direction cautiously down one of the long hallways.

Shortly the passage turned abruptly to the right, then to the left, and they found themselves in a small open courtyard, having no less than half a dozen narrow, ominous-looking alleyways leading from it.

They stood still, speechless, waiting for a repetition of the sound to tell them which might be the proper opening to take. In a moment the shriek was repeated, louder and more awesome than ever. They were not far from its source, that was evident.

Hurriedly placing a large stone in front of the passage through which they had just come, in order not to mistake it on their return, they followed on tiptoe the direction of the sound.

At the end of the alleyway they came to a small square room, a hole in the roof of which admitted only light enough to give a sort of pertinence to the grewsomeness of the place.

Danny made out what appeared to be an ancient cistern in the middle of the floor. He was scarcely half way to the edge of its coping when out of the depths of it came a bubbling, a gurgling, a half moan and half cry, an almost deafening shriek—all in regular succession.

The shriek was terrible enough, but the impressive, grave-like silence that followed was worse. It was nerve racking, nauseating. The blood ran cold in the sailors' veins.

Picking up a stone, the best procurable instrument of protection, and motioning for Hughey to follow suit, Danny crawled cautiously on his stomach to the hole in the floor. When he had gained its edge he peered down. The darkness of the abyss seemed only to mock him. He listened, and heard a faint dripping

of water. Hughey leaned over the coping and held a lighted candle as far down into the cistern as the length of his arm permitted.

What the sailors saw by the candle's flickering glimmer was a hollow pipe of bamboo rigged perpendicularly upon a cross-piece between two upright bamboo poles. At its lower end appeared to be several hollow, whistle-like projections which made the thing resemble a kind of native musical instrument. Water was dripping from a small metal pipe projecting from the wall of the cistern, into a copper lined wooden box attached to the top of the hollow bamboo.

As if charmed by the simplicity of the contrivance, they watched the water—drip—drip—drip into the little wooden box. At last it was full. Then suddenly the whole thing commenced to move slowly, deliberately, down the cross-piece between the bamboo uprights. It seemed as though some mysterious unseen hand was drawing it across the cistern.

The lid of the hole in the bottom of the box opened automatically; the water began to pour into the hollow bamboo; and the whistles at the bottom gave forth a low, lugubrious cry. As the pipe filled with water from the box the air pressure increased, and the sound became louder and shriller, until, with a piercing shriek, the pipe announced that it held its capacity. With this came a sudden release of the air pressure, and the racket stopped; the whistles at the bottom belched forth the water that the pipe had contained, while a nice adjustment of its mechanism caused the whole contrivance to slide back over the cross-piece until the little wooden box came again just under the end of the dripping metal water pipe.

They watched it work a second and a third time. It took just seven minutes and a quarter for the box to fill.

"What do you make of it?" asked Hughey.

"Ut's put there fer sumpin'," Danny replied.

"D' you think?" queried Hughey in true Doctor Watson fashion.

"Oi know ut," said Danny. "Ut was put there t' scare people. Did ye notice the toime the nager lost gittin' over th' hills whin he heard ut? Oi think Oi'll unship ut."

With Hughey holding to his belt to steady him, Danny climbed over the coping and straddled the dark depths of the cistern a man's height below its top. He leaned over and demolished the shrieker piece by piece and handed it up to his companion.

"There, me bucko," he said, addressing the instrument, as he scrambled back over the edge of the cistern, "ye've screeched yer last. Now in pace an' quiet we'll try t' discover what ye was put there fer."

A careful exploration of the little room resulted in the discovery of a wooden door so cleverly smeared with mud and plaster to resemble the surrounding walls that only the closest scrutiny could possibly reveal its presence. Not a hinge nor a lock was visible.

"Stand by with yer shillala, Hughey, whoile Oi bust th' dure open," whispered Danny; "Hivven only knows what's on th' ither soide of ut."

He put his big red palms against the panel and pushed for all he was worth, but could not force it open. He placed his shoulder to it and shoved, yet without a sign of its yielding. He tried to wedge his finger ends into the almost imperceptible crack between the door and the wall, but to no purpose. In desperation he snatched Hughey's club and attempted to pry it open from the bottom.

Suddenly the top of the door fell out toward them, as if the thing rotated upon a pin in the center. Both men recoiled instinctively, anticipating several hundred varieties of trouble.

Only a cold, clammy draught swept through the opening and beat upon their faces. They stood breathless for several minutes. Not a sound came from within. Then, without speaking, they wormed their way beneath the poised door.

The room was large, and as dark as the shadows of Avernus, its only opening being the doorway through which the sailors had just crawled. They held their candles high, the better to make a preliminary survey of the place.

One glance about suggested to Hughey the why and wherefore of the ingenious shrieking sentinel of the caves of Shurwar Toda.

"Counterfeiters!" he gasped.

"Sure," agreed Danny, as if he had had inside information about the layout all along.

In one corner of the room the men discerned a heating furnace and crucibles. A number of dies, which appeared to have been used to no small extent lay scattered upon two tables, and a few shelves, the den's only furniture. It looked as though the place had been vacated in a hurry.

On the floor near the furnace a square piece of white paper, folded neatly, caught Danny's eye. He crossed the room to pick it up, while Hughey examined some of the dies.

There appeared to be some writing upon the paper. It was evidently a letter, dropped by accident by one of the gang; but then, thought Danny, what heathen Hindu, mole-like counterfeiter, if able to read or write at all, would be corresponding with the outside world. Danny turned the paper over with his toe and held the candle close upon it.

The handwriting was in English. He snatched it up and squinted at it closely.

GOD! It was *his* handwriting!

He unfolded the paper with nervous thumb and forefinger. A cold perspiration broke out over his temples.

Down at the bottom of the sheet he saw—he saw *his own signature*.

He started at the top of the page and read, while the hot wax from his candle dripped upon the paper and blurred the script.

The letter ended with,

"Your brother,
Danny."

He shot a glance at his companion. Finding him still absorbed in the examination of the dies, Danny surreptitiously crumbled up the paper and stowed it away in his blouse.

He grasped at the furnace for support; his head was swimming and——

"I forgot to tell you, Danny," said Hughey, picking around among the shelves, and not turning to catch Danny wipe a puddle of salt water off his cheek with a big red knuckle, "I forgot to tell you there was a couple of Yanks in that gang of counterfeiters they overhauled in Delhi a daiy or two back."

"Ye don't tell me," was his companion's misleading reply.

"Matey," mused Danny, that evening on the way back to Dhanera, as he sat in the bed of the ox cart fondling the bamboo scarecrow, "Oi've jist been a-thinkin' ut'd be no use fer me t' go up t' Del-hoi. Oi've takin' one o' me suddin' disloikin's t' Ambrose."

Number Tens, Broad

BY RUDOLPH RAPHAEL

Durgan, pavement pounder, one of New York's "finest," elevated to the detective force, goes after a shrewd criminal and gets him. But he doesn't bring his man home because his shoes were——

DURGAN ostentatiously produced a large fat cigar, gazed with pardonable pride at the glittering band which encircled it, and having carefully bitten off the end, he smiled with the complacency of a spoiled child of fortune as his patent cigar lighter unexpectedly performed its advertised function.

For a few moments he puffed away contentedly and then proceeded to make himself comfortable. He was the sole occupant of the smoking compartment of a sleeping car which was being dragged on its way to Richmond at the rate of forty miles an hour.

Everything in the compartment interested Durgan: the gleaming nickel of the wash basins, the artistically folded towels, the ice-water arrangements, the magnificent but germ-laden draperies which fell over the doorway. Each had its special fascination for him because, though his appearance would indicate that he was worldly-wise, this was really the first time Durgan had traveled on a sleeping car.

He picked up an abandoned magazine and yawned over an article on freight rates, which he laboriously spelled out in a low voice. Soon tiring of this, he refreshed himself with ice water to an alarming extent and then sought further distraction in washing his hands, the elusive water in the basin arousing his amazement and despair.

Seating himself at the window again, he looked at the fleeting scenery sharply outlined in the gathering dusk, but the beauties of nature had small appeal for him. Presently he drew a wallet out of his inside pocket, from which he selected one of several documents.

It was a newspaper clipping of recent date, and in the curious manner of the illiterate he proceeded to read it aloud in a low, droning voice.

"Yesterday at noon Mrs. J. W. Mason, who keeps a boarding house at 463 West 24th Street, was curious to learn why her two boarders in the rear room of the second floor failed to respond to the Sunday dinner bell. Upon going to the room occupied by the two young men, John Halpin and Thomas Ward, she knocked, and on receiving no response, tried the door, which, to her surprise, proved to be unlocked.

Upon entering the room she uttered a piercing scream, which brought up several of her boarders, who discovered Mrs. Mason in a faint at the threshold of the room and, lying across the bed, they beheld the dead body of Thomas Ward. After reviving Mrs. Mason, the police, who had been summoned, succeeded in eliciting a few meagre details. The dead man, Ward, and John Halpin had been intimate friends and roommates for two years. Mrs. Mason had frequently commented on the apparently close nature of their friendship. They were both salesmen in the same wholesale house, received fair salaries, and

had no bad habits. John Halpin was unaccountably absent and various clews about the room seemed to point to him as the murderer of his friend. Later in the day the detective bureau succeeded in tracing Halpin's movements, which finally led to the Pennsylvania Station, from where it appeared the man intended to go to some point South. Mrs. Mason's description of Halpin was somewhat vague and fitted the appearance of the average man, so little can be expected from that source, but the detective bureau hints at some important clews in its possession and has placed the case in the hands of Timothy Durgan, one of its best men."

When Durgan finished droning out this item his face broke into an illuminating smile evoked by the concluding paragraph of the article.

He carefully replaced the document in his wallet, drew up a chair, and stretched his legs upon it. He gazed abstractedly at his feet, which loomed large upon the chair. Ten years of patrol duty as a New York policeman had broadened Durgan's feet to the traditional requirements of the force, but now that he was a member of the detective bureau he was prone to resent the generous acreage which his feet required in his present incarnation. However, Durgan was of an optimistic nature and had invested in patent leather shoes with inconspicuous soles, which in a measure served to distract the attention of the curious and morbid.

Presently the negro porter entered the compartment. He resentfully swept up the ashes which had dropped from Durgan's cigar, viciously polished the basin with the towel which Durgan had used, and reproachfully dusted the chair from which Durgan had hastily removed his feet upon the porter's entrance. The negro then gave a comprehensive glance over the entire compartment to see if any further damage had been effected by his hereditary enemy, the passenger, and was about to make a disdainful exit when Durgan coughed impressively.

The porter involuntarily paused at the doorway and turned towards Durgan, who was in the act of folding a bill of unknown denomination.

A look of speculation lit up the negro's eye, his face brightened with amiability, and he radiated devotion from every angle of his anatomy.

Durgan scratched the end of his nose reflectively with the folded bank note and solemnly winked at the white-coated personification of goodwill standing before him.

"Yes, sah," the negro whispered confidentially. "Yes sah, I have a flask of fine whiskey in mah closet, sah; 'gainst the rules, sah, but—"

Durgan waved the suggestion aside. "Nothing doing in that line, Bill. Come here."

The negro approached deferentially, the denomination of the folded bill eluding his vigilant though furtive glance.

"Your car pretty full, Bill?" inquired Durgan.

"Tol'able, sah, only tol'able."

"How many, Bill? How many men?"

"Le'me see, sah. Dere's a gen'man in lower three—one in lower six, and one in nine—yes, sah, and one moh' in eight—all lowers—de rest is all ladies and wimmen, sah."

Durgan nodded. "Then there are four men besides myself?"

"Yes, sah, five gen'men all told."

"Now, Bill," said Durgan, "I'll relieve your mind at once. This is a two dollar bill."

"Yes, sah," gasped the porter, anxious for further development.

"This two dollar bill," resumed Durgan—"By the way, is your name Bill?"

"No, sah; no, sah. Mah name is Peter—Peter Jackson."

"Well, I'm going to call you Bill. You don't mind, do you?"

"No, sah, I don't mind at all. I never did care much for Peter nohow. Bill jest suits me fine, sah."

"Well, Bill," said Durgan, "put this in your clothes and listen."

The negro's hand tremblingly grasped the money and his ample ears fluttered with eager attention.

"Listen, Bill. I want you to examine the satchels of all the men in your car. I don't want you to open them, you understand, I only want you to let me know the initials on them. Do you get me, Bill, the initials."

The porter nodded understandingly. "Yes, sah, I'll get 'em all right. Yes, sah."

Durgan yawned with a fine assumption of indifference as he said:

"Listen, Bill. If you get me the right initials—why—I might hand out a duplicate of that bank note. See?"

The black man's eyes sparkled.

"Thank you, sah, thank you. Jest let me get dat right. If I gets the right initials for you—is dat right, sah?"

"That's right, Bill," replied Durgan.

"Yes, sah. You—you couldn't, now—give me some idee what initials you was lookin' for—could you, sah?"

"No, no, Bill. I couldn't. You've got to take a sporting chance, Bill, and remember, if you happen to bring me the right initials, the two spot is yours."

The negro laughed hysterically. "Golly, sah, somethin' like playin' policy. Dere's twenty-six letters in d' alphabet and I jest got to strike de right combination to win—yes, sah."

Durgan smiled reassuringly as he replied, "You've got the right idea, Bill, now go in and win."

The porter disappeared noiselessly into the body of the car and Timothy Durgan of the Metropolitan Detective Bureau smiled with the satisfaction of the man conscious of having accomplished a clever stroke in the pursuit of duty.

This was his first important assignment, his previous incursions in the pursuit of criminals having been confined to petty cases, bare of interest and devoid of glory, but his unbounded enthusiasm in trailing these "pikers," as the office termed them, had brought him to the favorable notice of his chief and resulted in his present mission.

Physically, Durgan had few of the external attributes of the detective of magazines. His good-natured, but commonplace features, clear wholesome complexion, well oiled hair, and strong frame encased in a suit of the "snappy" brand of clothing known to earnest students of the advertising pages of the magazines, gave him the debonair appearance of an amiable bartender on his vacation.

For all that, Durgan was an efficient man and had an abundant stock of "horse sense," which effectually took the place of the clever theories of deduction and psychology of the more brilliant detective of current literature. In fact, Durgan suffered from a lack of imagination. Plain, brutal facts alone appealed to him—the tangible materialistic things of life which he could comprehend without mental effort.

He was on his way to apprehend John Halpin, brutal slayer of his room-mate, Thomas Ward. These were the bald details which he could understand. That there was no evidence, so far, as to the murderer's motive did not concern Durgan. That was the prosecuting attorney's business. The vague description of the fugitive, in his possession, might have discouraged a less optimistic man than Durgan. "John Halpin—age about 34—medium height—sallow complexion—dark eyes": physical characteristics which might easily fit a few million men in the country.

Presently the porter entered, teeming with importance. "Yes, sah, I'se got three of them—right here, sah." He handed Durgan a slip of paper which the latter studied intently and read aloud. "A.S. in lower three—B.J. in lower six—Great Scott! J.H. in lower eight."

The negro watched him with feverish interest. "Yes, sah. Did I hit de right combination, sah?"

Durgan did not reply. His eyes were riveted on the slip. At last he produced a two dollar bill from his pocket and gave it to the delighted porter.

"Thank you, sah, thank you. Any—anything mo' I can do for you, sah?"

"Not just now, Bill. Tell me—what kind of a man is lower eight?"

"Yes, sah. He's a quiet party—he's sittin' in his section now—he don't do nothin' but look out de window—he's sittin' dar now—a dark gen'man—yes, sah."

"All right, Bill, that will do." Durgan rose, yawned, stretched his huge arms, and passed into the main body of the car.

After locating section eight, he found a vacant seat which afforded him an excellent view of the man in whom he was so deeply interested. This man was anywhere between thirty and forty years of age with dark heavy eyebrows and closely shaven face. He had a book in his hand but it seemed to lack interest for him, as his eyes frequently wandered to the fleeting landscape, while his lips moved from time to time with nervous energy. His suitcase rested on the seat opposite to him and Durgan noted with satisfaction that it bore the initials J.H.

Durgan regarded his quarry with keen curiosity and, though not much given to speculation, he found himself wondering how such a mild, serious-looking man could be the chief actor in the cold-blooded drama back in the cheap boarding house on Twenty-fourth Street.

He muttered to himself, "Gee—his best friend—his pal. Can you beat it? Some skirt, likely, it's always a skirt."

Presently the man took up his satchel, opened it, and produced a pipe and tobacco pouch. He rose and thoughtfully passed into the smoking compartment.

The porter was now busily engaged in arranging the berths for the night. This process fascinated Durgan for about ten minutes, after which he leisurely entered the smoking compartment where he found the man seated at the window smoking a briar pipe. Durgan's entrance failed to arouse him from his meditative attitude. He puffed his pipe at intervals and when he withdrew it from his mouth his lips would move rapidly as if he were talking to himself.

"A queer guy, all right," thought Durgan, who had meanwhile lighted a cigar and taken the arm-chair, so that he faced the man seated on the couch.

"Fine weather we're having," ventured Durgan after a painful spell of silence. The man turned from the window and regarded Durgan with an absent-minded stare.

"Yes—yes—nice weather indeed," he replied.

Durgan coughed perfunctorily. He felt he had opened up diplomatic relations very cleverly. He yawned and stretched himself with the abandon of the bored traveler and said, "Devilish tiresome ride, isn't it?" The man looked at Durgan with an expression of kindly indulgence as he replied, "Do you really think so? You should have been with me last Thursday when I rode from Berlin to St. Petersburg without a stop."

Durgan's eyes blinked and he caught himself breathing heavily.

"Did I get you right? Did you say you went from Berlin to St. Petersburg last—last Thursday?"

The man nodded patiently as he an-

swered his astonished companion: "Certainly, but that was really nothing at all. Of course you know that little way-station just twelve miles out of Constantinople—it's where they throw on the mail bag."

Durgan almost gulped down his cigar before he recovered himself sufficiently to reply, "Sure—I remember it well."

"Of course you do," said the man. "Well, last Sunday night—let me see—today is Wednesday—no, it was Monday night, because I remember now that I had a fit of the blues and wanted a little change, so I happened to stroll by that little way-station outside of Constantinople—I think it is only twelve miles out from there, isn't it?"

Durgan pondered with becoming hesitation before he replied: "No, I think it's nearer fourteen miles if I remember rightly."

The man reached over, his face beaming with pleasure, and grasped Durgan's unresisting hand with fervor.

"Right you are," he said, "it is fourteen miles."

Durgan's chest swelled visibly and he smiled with modest satisfaction. The other leaned back in his seat and resumed his recital.

"Well, as I was saying, I was feeling blue and just then the 7.40 Crescent Express from Constantinople came thundering along, but slowed up at this little station for the mail bag as usual. Then on the impulse of the moment—I am very impulsive, aren't you?"

Durgan nodded cheerfully in assent, whereupon the man leaned over again and grasped Durgan's hand with enthusiasm as he said, "I knew you were. Well, as I was saying, on the impulse of the moment I jumped aboard, found an empty compartment, and before I had a chance to change my mind the train had started off, and for hours and hours and hours I rode and rode and rode until last night I found myself in Peoria, Illinois. Some traveling, eh?"

Durgan gasped with admiration. "Say, as a traveler, you've got old Doc Cooke skinned several miles and then some."

The man smiled with pardonable pride and took out of his pocket a paper bag of gum-drops on the verge of hopeless dissolution, which he offered to Durgan in a fine spirit of camaraderie. Durgan declined the refreshment with great difficulty, whereupon the man became moody and silent and presently dropped into a profound and sonorous slumber.

Durgan looked at the man for several minutes. He then pinched himself on the arms, crossed to the basin and bathed his brow with ice water, and thus having convinced himself that he was awake muttered to himself, "The guy has gone daffy over that murder."

A sudden lurch of the train awakened the sleeping man, who, after rubbing his eyes vigorously, regarded Durgan with interest. "I beg your pardon," he said. "Haven't I met you somewhere?"

Durgan was puzzled for a moment before he replied, "Sure—don't you remember—I'm the man you met at that little way-station fourteen miles out of Constantinople."

The man looked at Durgan with alarm. "Where—where did you say?"

Durgan shifted uneasily.

"Why—I—I met you in some foreign city, didn't I?"

The man shook his head emphatically. "No, sir, I never was abroad in my life."

Durgan, recovering his composure, replied: "Now I remember where I saw you—it was on West Twenty-fourth Street one day last week."

The man shrugged his shoulders with indifference as he said, "Perhaps you're right." He then relapsed into his former moody silence and presently fell asleep again.

Durgan finished his cigar, took out a time-table, and after infinite mental effort he discovered that under reasonable conditions the train would arrive in Richmond at 7.30 in the morning. It was now eleven o'clock and as the novelty of the trip had worn off and he felt tired, he gave a parting glance at the snoring man and went in to find his berth. The friendly porter, upon being questioned, assured him that the train would not stop anywhere until they reached Richmond, so Durgan was now quite convinced that his man was as safe on the train as he would be in a cell. Having instructed the porter to arouse him at six in the morning without fail, he proceeded to turn in for the night, a feat which he accomplished after incredible effort.

The unfamiliar surroundings and limited space prevented him from falling asleep for some time so he gave himself up to pleasurable reflection. He had almost accomplished what he had started out to do. John Halpin had been providentially thrown into his hands, and he, Durgan, would have the "bracelets" on him as the train pulled into Richmond in the morning. His first important mission—and he had "made good"! Greater satisfaction than this comes to but few of us.

The motion of the speeding train soon lulled Durgan into the profound slumber of the man in perfect health, whose task has been well accomplished.

The hours dragged on and the miles were ticked off with rhythmic precision. Quiet reigned within the car, broken only by the persistent spirit of the road which nightly haunts every sleeping car in the universe—the man who gives a perfect imitation of a planing mill, operating under great industrial difficulties in the centre of a dense lumber district.

At the extreme end of the car, under a dim light, the negro porter sat on a low stool, absorbed in his nightly task of carefully removing perfectly good shines from the passengers' shoes and imparting the traditional dull stove polish accursed by a long-suffering traveling public. Durgan's new patent-leather shoes were at present claiming his attention. It was the last pair to be done, and as he recalled their owner's munificence, he bestowed affectionate effort on them. He went to the task with energy and laudable purpose and the pristine brilliance of Durgan's patent leathers was effectually dimmed for evermore.

In due time when the porter went to arouse Durgan, the latter indignantly refused to believe that it was six o'clock. He raised the window shade in his berth and discovered that it was pitch dark and raining hard. He was about to turn over and resume his disturbed slumbers when he recalled his important mission. With a supreme effort he gathered together his befuddled faculties and bravely sat up. Countless travelers in the past have sat up in sleeping berths with the same unvarying results. Durgan rubbed the top of his head viciously and rapidly exhausted his well-furnished vocabulary of profanity, and, under the inspiration of the moment, he evolved some valuable additions to the same. Much refreshed by these exertions and thoroughly aroused, he dressed and groped his way to the lavatory where he completed his toilette.

He took the corner seat by the window, lit a cigar, and proceeded to formulate his plans for arresting his man as quietly and unobtrusively as possible just before the train should reach Richmond. Meanwhile the passengers commenced to appear in various styles of negligee, one man in particular exciting his envy and admiration by shaving himself fearlessly with a regular razor, without cutting his throat.

It was now after seven o'clock and

Durgan anxiously awaited the appearance of John Halpin. Presently the porter came in with his little broom to brush off the passengers. When Durgan's turn arrived he made a whispered inquiry regarding the man in lower eight.

"No, sah, he's not up yet. I guess I'll go and wake him."

Durgan followed the porter to lower eight and waited. The negro presently turned to Durgan with such an expression of frank amazement that the latter's heart fluttered violently.

"He's gone, sah," gasped the porter, throwing back the curtains of the berth. Durgan staggered forward and swept his hand over the bed. "I'll be damned," he groaned. Presently he picked up from the pillow a soiled cuff, at the same time noting that the window was wide open. Taking the cuff to the light he uttered a low exclamation, for he saw that it was covered with some writing. With difficulty he spelled out the message, which ran as follows:

"Friend Durgan,

Sorry to leave you—but will meet you at that little way-station outside of Constantinople. Au revoir.

Yours sincerely,

James Horner.

P. S. I recognized you by your feet, old sport."

Durgan looked at the wondering negro and said, "Who the devil is James Horner and where did he go?"

The negro shook his head in bewilderment.

"Say, Bill, did this train stop anywhere since I went to bed last night?"

The porter thought a moment before he replied, "Come to think of it, sah, we did stop at about two this morning to replace a coupling which got broke on one of the cars, but it only took ten minutes, sah."

"That's enough, Bill, that's when that guy made his little getaway. Oh, gee, ain't I the prize boob!"

The train was now pulling into the depot at Richmond, so Durgan, in a profound state of dejection, picked up his grip and sadly followed the procession out of the car.

A telegraph boy was standing on the platform calling out a name—"Mr. Timothy Durgan—Mr. Timothy Durgan."

The owner of that distinguished name was so overcome by the realization of his failure that at first the boy's voice made no impression on him. Finally the constant repetition of his name attracted his attention and signing the book he took the telegram from the boy. With trembling hands he opened the envelope and read the following message from his chief, dated early that morning from New York:

"Ward case turned out to be suicide. Halpin home. His absence satisfactorily explained. While in Richmond look for James Horner alias Harlem Bill, wanted for fifty thousand dollar swindle. Bank offers three thousand reward. Photo and description at Richmond headquarters. Get busy and wire result."

Durgan wiped the gathering moisture from his throbbing brow and, suppressing a sob, dragged himself wearily to the information window, where he made inquiries regarding the departure of the earliest train to New York.

Saving His Face

BY FLOY PASCAL COWAN

It's the little things of life that count or, as this young man's unfortunate experience proved, it's not having the little things that count most.

GERRY LAWSON, lounging comfortably in the smoking compartment, hurled his youth and happiness brutally in the faces of the middle-aged men about him, who had tasted life and found it sour, and looked at it and found —a mirage. Cynically they figured it out that of course he would sooner or later arrive at their undesirable vantage point above the mists of illusion, but nevertheless they envied him his present benighted state in the valley of dreams. They would have liked to go back. Any one of them, apparently so absorbed in his paper, would have bartered many of his worldly goods to have again as his own possession that look of eagerness and expectancy that peeped forth undisguisedly from Gerry's good-looking grey eyes.

He sat idly looking out at the scenery that drifted rapidly past, and as the train stopped at the little station of La Port he was immediately fascinated by the sight of some particularly beautiful baskets of fruit on a wagon at the platform. He bounded up and out of the car, made a quick purchase of one of them, and just as the train began to move sprang upon the step, when he was rudely jerked back by a pair of powerful arms that held him in spite of his frantic offorts to free himself. The fruit rolled upon the ground, and Gerry twisted round—a wrathful fist poised for a blow—when an officer's badge flashed in his eyes.

"Not so fast, if you please," said the big, rough-looking man confronting him. "You're wanted."

"What the devil do you mean?" cried Gerry.

"Just that. Come along."

Gerry was powerful himself. He realized as he surveyed the other man that he never could have been hauled from the train had he not been poised unsteadily on the step and weighted down with the basket.

"Not much," he said indignantly, squaring his shoulders. "Hang you, you have made me miss my train with your foolish mistake."

"There ain't no mistake. You've been telegraphed for, and I was just searching the cars when I saw you on the platform. Now let's don't have no trouble. There aint the shadow of a doubt about your being the man. You match the description to a T.Y.ty."

"You are a damned country bumpkin," cried Gerry explosively. "You've made me miss an important engagement up the road. Now be quick. Let's get this matter of my identity settled if you please. "I am—"

"If you please," said the other mimicking Gerry's wrathful politeness, "we will go up the street just a piece—and settle matters."

He hauled Gerry off to the little police station, where there was another very pompous looking officer.

"It's him, all right," said the sheriff, with evident pride. "And I just did nab him."

"Now see here," said Gerry more quietly. "You fellows have made a mistake. I am Gerry Lawson of the banking firm of Berry and Lawson in Indianapolis." He reached in his pockets impatiently. "Curse the luck! I've left all my papers in my other clothes."

The officer grinned. "It won't go. See here. You are in for it and might as well submit quietly. You are Wilson Channing, alias Jimmy Cross, and Chicago wants you for some big robberies you've been putting through while playing the society game. You are to go back there just as fast as we can hustle you."

"I'll be— Now look here—"

But the sheriff, with a freedom that brought murder into Gerry's eyes, was proceeding deliberately through each and every pocket upon his person. With great glee he hauled out three dull old velvet jewel cases. "Caught with the goods! You were somewhat choosy about what you took."

There was a splendid necklace of diamonds in one case, there were two bracelets of delicate and exquisite workmanship studded with rare jewels in another, and in a smaller box a ruby, red as the wines of the Orient, set in a small ring of dull old gold.

"Now, what you got to say, young man?"

"Nothing—nothing at all," said Gerry, with the wrath of the Olympian Gods on his boyish face. "But if you put your dirty fingers on those jewels I'll break your putty face. Those are my mother's jewels!"

"Oh, likely. Say, you are real cute, you are."

"If you will please come down to common sense," said Gerry, feeling that murder would certainly be laid at his door shortly, "and if you have such a thing as a telephone in this benighted hole, you will go to it and call up J. C. Berry of Indianapolis and ask him to describe for you minutely the personal appearance of his partner, Gerry Lawson. I had breakfast with him this morning. I presume if his description fits me you will be satisfied."

The officer signified sullenly that he supposed it would, but there was small chance of the description suiting him. He guessed he had been in the business long enough to know a crook when he saw one. It was just a ruse to gain time.

Gerry, left under the watchful eye of the other officer, took out a cigar and began to smoke contentedly. After all there was no great damage done—except to his temper. It would certainly be possible to get some kind of a rig to ride the nine remaining miles in. He pulled out his watch. Yes, Berry would be in his office, just back from lunch. Under the soothing influence of the smoke his wrath subsided, and he drifted off into a happy revery. He had almost forgotten all about the sheriff when that officer opened the door abruptly, a satisfied smirk on his face.

"I thought it would be a waste of time," he drawled. "I got Berry all right but his description doesn't fit you. Now—"

"What!" thundered Gerry, getting to his feet threateningly. "What kind of a game are you putting up on me anyway? You didn't call him! You— Where is that 'phone!"

"Now see here, young man," said the sheriff, pulling out his watch, "we are going back to Chicago on that three-five train, and you might as well quit your bluff. It's two-ten now. If you want to amuse yourself by blowing in your money at the 'phone for half an hour, why we'll go in there and let you. Then we're going to beat it for the station and catch that train."

Gerry, with a grim line settling about

his mouth went to the 'phone and called up his partner. If Berry was trying to be funny— "What? you can't get him?" Gerry looked at his watch and made a mental note of the time it took to get from the office out to the park. Berry, damn his time, had gone off to the ball game. He'd bet his hat on it. One after another he called up several of his prominent business friends—men whose word would be his release. Not one of them could be located. In spite of the increasing gravity of his situation, a boyish grin spread over his face.

"The low-down scoundrels," he said to himself, "the last one of them has lit out for the game—just when a fellow needs them, too!"

The officer took out his watch. "It is now," he said, "just twenty minutes to three. In ten minutes we'll start for the station. We don't want to run no risk of missing that train. I've notified 'em that I've got you. They wouldn't like to be disappointed."

Gerry ground his teeth. His fists had a desperate yearning to pound the complacent, gloating visage of this low-life individual who, ridiculous as it seemed, represented the law. Ten minutes! He dared not risk another long-distance call. Much as he hated to do it there was only one thing to do. He turned savagely to the officer.

"I presume you know of Miles O'Donald, whose estate lies some nine miles up the road. I presume you are acquainted with the fact that he is one of the richest and most respected men in the state, whose honor no man could question? It just happens that I was on my way to a house party at his home when you made your brilliant capture of me. I suppose even you will appreciate the extreme distaste I have for calling upon him in this predicament but there seems no other way. I also presume you will accept his word."

The officer grinned with delight. "They told me you was a smooth one," he said, "but they didn't do you justice by a long sight. It's likely, ain't it, that you are a friend of the richest man in the state! But go long and have your fun. Use up your ten minutes in your own way. It's all the same to me."

Again he consulted his watch. Two minutes had slipped by. Gerry turned to the 'phone and called up the O'Donald residence and asked for Mr. O'Donald. No, he was not in the house. Out riding somewhere on the place. Gerry called over several names. No, the men were coming up on the night train. There was a perceptible pause.

"Hurry up," said the officer.

Berry's voice lowered. "Is—Miss O'Donald there?" he asked.

"Oh Lord, you are a great one!" said the sheriff.

"Could you," Gerry was saying softly, "could you jump in your little car—immediately—and run up the road to La Port for me. I missed my train. Could you make it in—by three—five? It's important. I'll wait for you in the little park at the station."

Sitting on the small bench in the tiny park, that was scarcely more than a big flower bed, Gerry cast sidelong glances at the sheriff, and could have roared aloud with glee over the transformation his appearance was slowly undergoing. His assurance was slipping from him, his domineering manner subsiding into an attitude bordering on respect. And yet it was clear that he was not convinced. It would take the evidence of his own eyes to convince him that one of the O'Donald family was on speaking terms with this man.

"I happen to know Miss O'Donald by sight," he ventured, in a very mild voice. "You can't work in any confederate on me you know."

Gerry smoked in disdainful silence. He took out his watch. It lacked a few minutes to three. "I'll trouble you to hand over my jewelry," he said. "If the young lady proves not to be Miss O'Donald to your satisfaction you can shoot me, you know, if I try to escape with her. If it is—I don't propose to be asking you for the return of my property in her presence."

The officer reluctantly surrendered the jewelry. "Just bear in mind that I'm a pretty good shot, if you try any monkey business. Anyway, even if you are who you say you are I'd like to know how you come to be sailing round the country with a thousand dollars or so worth of jewels on your person. Looks damn suspicious to me."

"That jewelry," said Gerry happily, "lies entirely outside your jurisdiction. It is the gift of a very lovely old lady to a very lovely young one."

As the seconds ticked away the man's face brightened. "She, who ever she may be—ain't goin' to make it. The train is—"

Just then, far up the track, there was a low, muffled, scarcely discernible whistle of the train. Gerry's muscles were taut as his eyes strained up the length of smooth road that stretched beside the track. Surely, surely she would not be late. He had said "important."

Suddenly a little fleck of red dotted the centre of the road at the farthest point and gathered size at a rate that made Gerry's heart faint with fear. The man's eyes were fastened on it too. Again the locomotive shrilled its distant note of approach.

"Jus' remember," said the officer with ill-suppressed excitement, "that you ain't to make no sign—nor speak—till she speaks to you. This has got to be a bony fidy recogni—"

The little red car was rushing near, amid a swirl of dust. It slowed up like a beautiful bird just outside the iron railing of the park, and a lovely young girl, flushed and radiant, and eager-eyed, glanced quickly at the two men who had risen to their feet simultaneously. A look of disappointment passed over her face as she stared, bewildered and without any sign of recognition, right into Gerry's face. Gerry turned pale. What dreadful thing was the matter with him! The officer chuckled and laid his hand on Gerry's arm. It seemed like an hour, but was really but the fraction of a second before the girl broke into a peal of merry laughter.

"Gerry!" she cried. "Why—Gerry! I didn't—know you! You've—you've—cut off your mustache!"

Gerry threw his hand to his mouth, and then looked at the hand foolishly, as if he expected to see portions of the missing mustache adhering to it.

"Oh—so I have—so I have," he cried, "but I had forgotten all about it— I did it just before I caught the train—and meant to have some fun with—the crowd." He turned to the crestfallen sheriff with a smile and a bow as he walked out deliberately and got in the car.

"That doubtless explains my very marked resemblance to your er—friend, eh?" he said a bit teasingly. "Give him my regards, will you?"

The train was thundering by to Chicago. The officer looked at it sadly. It might have, it *should* have been bearing him off to deserved commendation and victory.

"Your partner said you had a mustache," he called in an injured tone of voice, as the little red car swung off up the road.

The Mystery of Chin Foo

BY ROX BURY

Here's a ghost story from the Orient where the swollen Yiang-tse Kiang River bears its burden of Chinamen. Three listeners to a yarn of a haunted house doubt its authenticity and make a fearful discovery.

IF the first mate of the *Sally J.* had possessed more respect for the superstitions of the Orient and less love for practical jokes he would have counted ten before sending three adventure-seeking landlubbers on what he felt certain was a wild goose chase for a supposed ghost that was said to exist in a decaying house.

He was a short, heavy-built man—this mate—with flabby jowls and a thick red neck. He was that seemingly incompatible combination of bravery and brutality.

It was the second visit in as many years of the *Sally J.* to Chin Foo, a small town some fifty miles up the great swollen Yiang-tse Kiang.

The thick-necked mate of the vessel lounged on the rail watching a boat with the three men glide steadily towards the shore about two hundred yards away. Suddenly it was lost behind a sampan, and was next seen edging its way among some house boats that crowded the shore.

The stench from the town floated out over the water with the incessant chatter of the almond-eyed natives. This, mingled with the clack of ducks, so grated on the man's nerves that he went into the cabin. He had little use for the country and less for its people. It reminded him of one big, disease-ridden, mud-hole.

"The ghost of Chin Foo," so he had told the three, "was the product of a cold, brutal midnight murder. The victim was an aged Englishman in the employ of the British government. On the outskirts of the town he erected a two-story frame house where he resided with his daughter as his sole companion. His official duties gave him little work, with the consequent result that his inactivity soon aroused the suspicion of the natives to the belief that he was enormously wealthy.

"One night, shortly after he had retired, his daughter heard a rush of feet across the floor above her head; a startled cry from her father, which was followed by a heavy thud on the floor. Realizing that something was amiss she seized the lamp and a revolver, and hurried up the stairs.

"The first object that met her gaze was the body of her aged parent prone on the floor and face downward. A thin stream of blood spurted from his throat which had been cut from ear to ear. She did not faint, but examined the wound and saw that death was but a matter of a few moments. The blade had been keen and cut through to the vertebrae. She glanced at the open window and surmised what had happened.

"The place had been entered by thieves seeking the supposed wealth of her father, and he had come upon them in the act of searching the room. To further strengthen her theory she saw

his hands were covered with oil. She did what she could to stop the little stream of crimson that flowed from his throat, then went to the window and fired two shots from the revolver in hopes of attracting attention. This done she closed the window and went down stairs.

"A few days later the body was placed in a metallic casket and conveyed to England. That was four years ago, but the girl never returned, while the ghost was said to be there every night to play his part! The rush of feet across the floor; the brief struggle; the agonized cry; the heavy thud of the falling body, and his turn was over."

That was the story told to the three by the mate, who laughed at their errand. It was the way it had been told to him, and he passed it on for what it was worth.

"I'm afraid the mate's been stringing us," growled the leader of the trio.

"He didn't say he ever heard it, Jim," piped up Shorty. "He just got it from some of these Chinks, and I reckon he don't believe it himself."

They found the place just as they were told it was left four years ago. It was a gloomy house standing against the sky like a lone sentinel. It was surrounded by a heavy wooden picket fence, and what had once been a gravel walk was now overgrown with weeds.

The place was locked, but they had little trouble in getting into the house.

The room they first entered had evidently been the parlor. A large rocking chair with a leather seat was covered with mold, while the upholstery of the other pieces had fallen prey to mice and insects.

"Just the place fer ghosts," remarked Jim in a whisper. His companions nodded their heads.

A bat, disturbed by the intruders, beat the air above them and they ducked instinctively. The glitter of the candle seemed to blind it, but it finally managed to escape through the open window, much to the relief of the three.

"Let's beat it," suggested Shorty, but the other two ignored his remarks and went ahead.

Under the leadership of Jim they entered the next room. It was altogether different from the one they had just left. The dampness and a sweet sickish odor filled the room.

"Opium!" observed Jim.

"It's fresh too," declared Shorty.

"That's funny," said the professor. "I never heard tell of a hop-smoking chink having any fondness for ghosts."

A search of the room revealed absolutely nothing but a few old rag carpets that had been drawn up in front of the open fireplace.

Jim poked among the ashes with a stick. They were hot!

"That beats 'ell!" he snapped. "There is somebody in this house."

They next searched upstairs but could find nothing of consequence. One of the rooms they could not enter, but took it for granted it was deserted like the rest. Their curiosity satisfied, they tramped down the stairs, and soon had a bright fire blazing on the hearth. It was a good protection against the raw east wind that had sprung up since they entered the place. Squatting about the fire they solved the mystery of Chin Foo in a dozen different ways. But the fumes of opium and the warmth of the fire soon carried them far away from Chin Foo.

Jim was the first to awake; he did not know what had aroused him, but was conscious of someone near besides his companions. The fire had died down, and the intense silence made him nervous. He listened intently.

There was someone near the window not ten feet away!

Then he heard it plainly; the snapping of underbrush and the tread of feet. Then the silence again.

He leaned over and poked his two companions with a stick. He was all action now, and had hardly finished arousing his companions when there was a heavy stamping of feet above; a wild cry and next a brief struggle. Then the heavy thud of a falling body.

"Quick!" he commanded. "Light that candle and follow me!"

When they reached the top of the stairs they discovered that the room where the noise came from was the one that was locked.

"Put your shoulders to it!" again commanded Jim. "Now then, all together!"

The door gave way and the three fell sprawling into the room. The candle was extinguished by a draft from an open window, and they were left in darkness.

"I've lost it," whimpered Shorty.

"Find it! Quick!"

Jim searched for it, and as he felt about the floor his hand came in contact with something warm and slimy that sent a chill through him. Next he felt a body!

"For God's sake light a match," he begged.

It seemed ages before the candle was recovered, and several matches went out in their excited attempts to light it. When the little flame finally struggled to a steady light, the first thing that met their eyes was a body sprawled at full length on the floor at their feet. It was the body of a white man!

The muscles of his hands twitched, and a small dark stream trickled from his throat across the floor towards the three men, who drew back instinctively and shuddered. The face of the man was turned away.

"This will never do," said Jim in a tone shaky enough for a sepulchre.

Jim leaned over the body and turned the head towards the glare of the light. As the ghastly features were revealed Jim dropped back.

It was the first mate of the Sally J.!

Jim's two companions huddled nearer the door.

Placing the candle in his hat to hide the glare from his own eyes, Jim threw a ray of light about the room. In the corner huddled two Chinamen. One of them held a blood-stained knife.

It did not take Jim and his two companions long to realize what had happened. They soon had the pair bound hand and foot. This accomplished, they went to the window for a breath of fresh air, and found an old ladder leaning against the side of the house just below the sill. It was the final clue. The mate had attempted to play a practical joke, and had come upon the two frightened robbers, who, thinking he was some intruder, promptly slit his throat.

Before the *Sally J.* left port, the ghost of Chin Foo had claimed two more lives: those of the two coolies, who had used the old consul's home, after murdering its owner, as a place to hide their loot. They knew they never would be molested as long as it was rumored that a ghost occupied the place, but they failed to reckon on the curiosity of the Anglo-Saxon.

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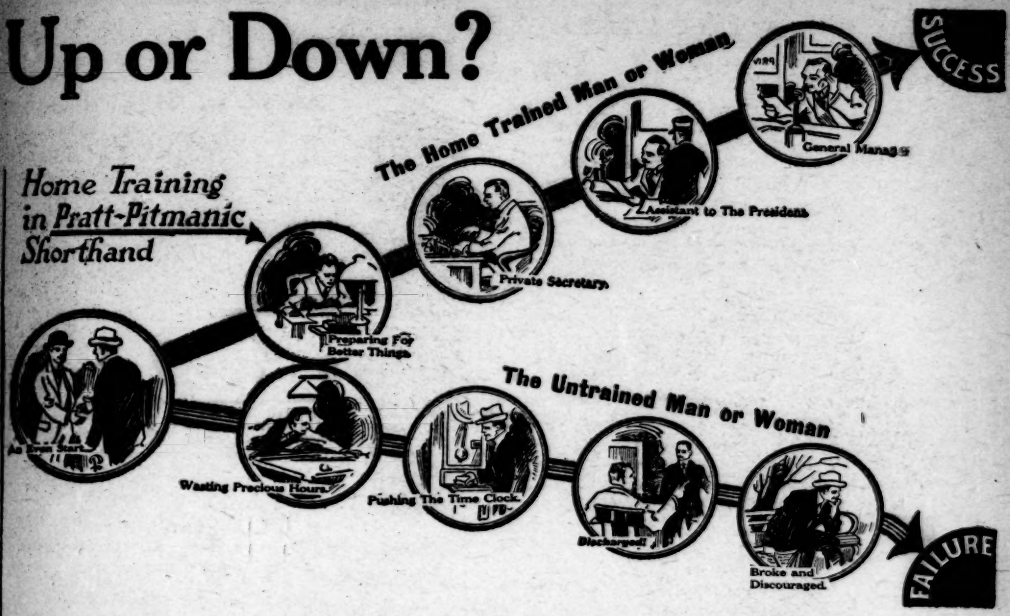

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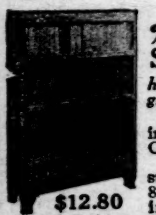

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AS THE MEDICAL world of today is conquering many diseases that were thought incurable fifty years ago, so is the wonderful **"Schuiling Rupture Lock"** daily performing the work of **perfect** holding, and **curing** the most obstinate cases of rupture. Thousands of former rupture victims have been changed from a state of misery and despair to one of renewed health and happiness, their former trouble being only a hazy memory of the past.

THE MANY YEARS of hard study and labor to bring about the production of this **Rupture Lock** was done for your sake, that you as a rupture sufferer might go about your daily task, free from annoyance, pain and inconvenience from this terrible affliction and to produce a thorough and lasting cure, and that it has succeeded is proven by the thousands of contented and cured patients everywhere.

THERE IS NOTHING in recent years that has caused such a stir amongst the rupture afflicted as this perfect rupture holding and curing Rupture Lock, for it is scientific in construction, easy to wear, remains in place at all times and under all conditions, it is light and airy, sensible, sane and durable in fact it is in true accord with the manner that **nature** requires the rupture held, so that she can strengthen and heal the ruptured parts without interference.

THIS RUPTURE LOCK has no springs, no nasty unsanitary leg straps, no elastic bands, no steel bands that encircle you like a hoop on a barrel. Such contraptions are injurious and in many cases positively dangerous to health and future welfare. This **Lock** is absolutely free in action and avoids any acute pressure on the pubic bone, hips or spine, but holds the ruptured parts with that direct, steady and soothing pressure that is so essential to **promote a speedy** and lasting cure.

OUR BOOK ON RUPTURE explains in full detail all the important and wonderful features of this truly **MARVEL** of the twentieth century. **SENT FREE BY RETURN MAIL.**

THIS RUPTURE LOCK will save you an operation, it will save you pain and torture from ill-fitting, worthless trusses, it will protect you from the dangers of strangulation, it will make you a new man or new woman, thanking the day we stepped into your life with this wonderful invention—in fact it will cure you to stay cured.

THE SCHUILING RUPTURE LOCK WILL BE SENT YOU ON 30 DAYS FREE TRIAL.

A thirty day free trial, which is ample time to prove that it is all and more **than is claimed for** it. That is the proper way to buy it, you must have a reasonable length of time to test it for your own satisfaction. We know what it will do, and you do not until you have tried it out for thirty days, then you will know its wonderful merits, as thousands of others know it today.

Read What a Minister of the Gospel Writes Us

Creedmore, N. C., July 28, 1913.

Gentlemen:

I have worn your rupture lock but five months, and find that the openings are now closed tightly. To say that your rupture lock is the world's greatest invention for ruptured people is not putting it any too strong, for I was afflicted with double rupture for many years, suffering intensely all the time; was unable to find anything that would hold me, and all proved as torturous as the rupture itself, until your lock was tried, when I felt like a new man the minute it was put on, and enjoyed perfect comfort all the time I wore it. I am a Baptist minister, and am well known in this community. You are welcome to use my name in any way you think best.

I pray the Lord to give you a long life, to be a help to suffering humanity. Sincerely yours.

Z. W. WHEELERS.

No Evidence Could be Stronger, 81 Years Old and Cured

Columbus, Ind., June 2, 1913.

To whom it may concern:

I procured a Schuiling Rupture Lock four months ago, and now find I am entirely cured. I had very large and painful double rupture, which caused me untold suffering for many years. They were as large as two fists. Never could find anything that would even hold them up for 10 minutes at a time, until I put on the Schuiling Rupture Lock, which held them at once and perfectly.

I am 81 years of age and never expected a cure at my age, all I asked was to be properly held; but to my happy surprise the openings closed tightly and firmly. I will gladly answer all who write me.

Yours truly,

JOHN SHINNERER.

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